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Border Harms and Everyday Violence. The Lived Experiences of
Border Crossers in Lesvos Island, Greece.

Evgenia Iliadou

PhD Thesis in Social Policy and Criminology, The Open University

October 2019

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Abstract

In 2015, Lesbos a Greek Island located at the North-Eastern edge of the Aegean Sea at the borders with Turkey became an important gate for border crossers who were fleeing persecution, wars, conflicts, authoritarian regimes and violence. During 2015 over 800,000 border crossers arrived via the Aegean Sea and Turkey into Greece and out of them approximately 500,000 arrived via Lesbos. Lesbos suddenly became the epicentre of what is predominantly referred to as the refugee crisis. The overwhelming arrivals of people seeking international protection and the mainstream discourses by the media and policy makers created a theatrical border spectacle full of suffering, misery and death. Although, Greece and Lesbos has been an important gate for unauthorised border crossers since the 1990s, it was only after the death of Alan Kurdi –a Syrian border crosser child, whose body was washed ashore at Turkey’s coast- that shocked and sensitised the public opinion and the EU policy makers. Even though policy makers expressed their “deep concerns” for the increased death toll of border crossers, in the name of protection of human lives and public order enforced a strengthened militarised thanatopolitical border regime. This thesis is an ethnographic study which explores the multiple, multilayered border-related harms and everyday violence border crossers experience while seeking sanctuary in Europe. Having Lesbos as a case study this research aims to document the collateral casualties in human cost of the monolithic and cruel EU border regime and the politics of deterrence. The rationale of the thesis rests on the idea that violence, abjection, spatial and temporal confinements, stuckedness and deaths border crossers experience in Lesbos, and other EU countries are neither random, unforeseen, unpreventable “tragic” events nor accidents; they are instead an outcome of the continuum of multiple political decisions being enforced in time and space since the 1985 Schengen Agreement. By deploying ethnography with auto-ethnographical evocative narratives in the form of Vignettes this thesis examines the continuum of violence in time and space and its harmful long-term impacts upon border crossers’ lives.

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Abbreviations

AHC	Albanian Helsinki Committee
AI	Amnesty International
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
RIC	Reception and Identification Centres
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EBCGA	European Border and Coast Guard
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EUROPOL	European Union's law Enforcement Agency
EUROJUST	European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit
K.E.P.Y	First Reception and Identification Service
FRONTEX	European Union Borders and Coast Guard Agency
GAS	Greek Asylum Service
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
GHM	Greek Helsinki Monitor
HWR	Human Rights Watch
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
KEELPNO	Ministry of Health and the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention
MsF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MdM	Médecins du Monde
MRG-G	Minority Rights Group-Greece
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
SOKADRE	Coordinated Organizations and Communities for Roma Human Rights Greece
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OMCT	World Organisation Against Torture
TPCs	Transit Processing Centres
ΕΔΕΕ	Administrative Inquiry Under Oath

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: An Unforeseen Crisis?

In 2015, images of displaced people making desperate journeys via the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea dominated the news and the social media. The mass and social media bombarded audiences with images of overcrowded dinghies floating, capsizing or sinking, and of rescues carried out by volunteers and humanitarian organisations. The massive border crossings, the misery, suffering, screams, and even deaths at Lesvos, the North-Eastern edge of the European border, were reduced to a “theatrical spectacle” (Gillespie, 2018, p. 150). The Aegean -similar to the Mediterranean Sea- became a deadly border (Albahari, 2016). Lesvos became the epicentre of the so-called refugee crisis. Over the course of 2015, approximately one million border crossers¹ reached Europe by sea, via Greece and Italy (Clayton & Holland, 2015). Approximately 500,000 border crossers reached Europe via Lesvos (Gillespie et al., 2016), an island with a general population in 2016 of 86,436 people (Hernandez, 2016). In 2018, there were 9,000 border crossers indefinitely trapped on Lesvos in limbo (UNHCR, 2018a).

Border crossings, violence, and the pain, suffering and deaths of people seeking international protection on Lesvos remain intense, enduring and traumatic lived experiences for me which still haunt me in my dreams as nightmares. I lived and worked for various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on Lesvos Island by supporting border crossers, survivors of torture, violence and trafficking including unaccompanied minors for more than a decade. This support, in the language of my profession, is commonly framed as “social work”. Parallel to social work, I have been politically involved in local activist movements supporting border crossers. In 2008 I traversed the threshold of Pagani detention centre for border crossers on Lesvos in order to provide social support to people who were reaching Lesvos (Iliadou, 2012). Naively, during that period, I thought that Pagani, termed as a “reception centre”, although in practice was a place of detention, was the worst space in Greece. I was wrong. Through the passage of time and accompanying

¹ Throughout this thesis I adopt the term “border crossers” instead of the legal and bureaucratised terms “refugees”, “asylum seekers” and “irregular migrants”. The border regime and borders produce border controls, visas and passports, “legal” or “illegal” mobilities, bureaucratic and legal classifications of people as migrants, refugees or asylum seekers. This thesis resists these terms. In doing so I am morally and politically engaging with grassroots movements, which condemn the violent border regime and its fatal consequences by emphasising the fact that the actual problem is the borders and not the people who cross them.

otherwise unaccompanied minors from detention centres to reception facilities, I had access to various “reception” centres within the Greek mainland. I thus observed, lived and served as an eyewitness (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) of what Andriani Fili calls the “detention continuum” (2016), as well as the insult and violation of human dignity. Reception centres within the Greek mainland and Lesvos before the refugee crisis era had systematically been condemned for the appalling, inhuman and degrading living conditions and for human rights’ abuses (Amnesty International, 2010, 2012a, Carr, 2012, 2015). Pagani was condemned as the worst detention centre in Europe during 2009, and as “worse than Dante’s inferno” (Carr, 2015, p. 94; Sarantidis, 2018b). The living conditions there were so appalling that the European Court of Human Rights ruled that they “violated the very meaning of human dignity” (2011). In 2010, Frontex’s Deputy Executive Director described Greece as the “hottest area of illegal immigration in Europe” (Carr, 2015, p. 88). Evros River, the natural border between Turkey and Northern Greece, became an enormous graveyard for hundreds of border crossers. This period was also framed as a “humanitarian crisis” (Pro Asyl, 2014).

Greece has been a major entry point for border crossers since the 1990s, when hundreds of thousands of Albanian border crossers arrived in the Greek mainland, in the aftermath of the collapse of the pyramid banking system in Albania (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004; Dalakoglou, 2016). Moreover, from the early 2000s onwards, Greece and particularly Lesvos was an important gateway for border-crossers coming from Asian and African countries, as documented by academics (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013; Iliadou, 2012; Lauth Bacas, 2010b) and from Human Rights Organisations (Human Rights Watch, 2012, 3; Greek Council for Refugees, 2004, p. 6). Between 2000 and 2014, Lesvos and the “refugee issue” did not attract as much attention as the refugee crisis of 2015. It was only after the death of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian refugee child, whose dead body was washed ashore upon the coasts of Turkey, that the public opinion and the cold EU technocrats were sensitised to the phenomenon which had gradually unfolded since the 1990s in Lesvos and Greece. Thus, the beginning of the refugee crisis is chronologically located in Alan Kurdi’s death who became, in Shahram Khosravi’s words, “an allegory of refugeeness” (Khosravi, 2010, p. 73). As Miriam Ticktin argues, “The photo [of Alan Kurdi] gave the “migrant crisis” a new face: innocence. It shamed Europe into action” (Ticktin, 2016, p. 258).

In the aftermath of the refugee crisis, the border became the spectacle of death and suffering to such an extent that Lesvos Island became suddenly famous. When I moved to

the UK in September 2015 to conduct my PhD research on border harms and everyday violence border crossers experience on Lesbos, most of the people I spoke to had never heard of Lesbos. I remember someone asking me “Lesbos? Where is that? Is it in Malta?” However, a few months later Lesbos became so famous that even Skala Sykamias -a small fishing village on Lesbos- was announced as the most popular holiday destination from AFAR travel magazine, due to the spectacle of border crossing and solidarity of the local people (Cosgrove, 2016; economy65, 2017). Lesbos became a popular destination, attracting celebrities, volunteers and voluntourists, journalists and academics, NGOs (Gillespie, 2018, p. 149), and even profiteers (lesvosnews, 2015). The scale of this intervention of various actors, particularly of NGOs, was so enormous that even I, throughout the research process, was repeatedly asked by local people, “Are you working for an NGO?” By having first-hand lived experiences and bearing witness to multiple border crossings, humanitarian crises, sufferings, pain and deaths in time and space, this crisis panic (in terms of discourse, intervention and humanitarianism) seemed to me incomprehensible from the beginning, whilst mixed feelings of anger and sadness overwhelmed me. How can people, the media and particularly the EU and Greek policymakers be sensitised only now by the death of a single child? What about the thousands of deaths of children, women and men within the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea crossroads from 2000 onwards (see Albahari, 2015b, 2016; themigrantsfiles & UNITED, n.d.)? How can these border crossings and deaths have been ignored? What crisis are they talking about, since the odysseys and tragedies that border crossers experience had been unfolding during the previous two decades? How can the EU and Greek policymakers speak about crisis by pretending that crisis is a sudden, unforeseen, “tragic” event, an “accident” and not an outcome of their political decisions?

The refugee crisis as a term has been challenged and problematised by scholars (Albahari, 2016; Collyer & King, 2016; De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016) on the grounds that it has been abused in order for EU policymakers to justify and legitimise emergent and exceptional measures –“a state of exception” (Agamben, 2005)- in the name of humanitarianism but at the expense of border-crossers’ lives. The refugee crisis language and events which have proliferated resulted in particular governmental responses (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016, p. 5) and practices. These were manifested via the overwhelming securitisation and militarisation of the external EU borders (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016, p. 10; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 24), internalisation and externalisation of the borders as well as a huge humanitarian intervention, particularly in Lesbos (Howden & Fotiadis, 2017), enabling what Maurizio Albahari frames as, “a moral economy of salvation; a sovereign

humanitarianism (...). A way of doing nothing while pretending to fight trafficking and the lethality of the border” (2016, p. 278).

This thesis has several key concerns and areas of focus.

- It addresses the range and multi-layered forms of border harms and everyday violence which border crossers experience *en route*, at, within and beyond the EU borders. It deals with how these harms and their impacts upon border crossers interact, are layered and unfold (Tombs, 2019) in a continuum within time and space, and why to a large extent those harms are rendered invisible.
- This thesis is also concerned with the continuum of institutional violence – the genealogy of enforcements and political decisions related to borders and migration controls, and their harmful consequences upon border crossers’ lives.
- I also examine the continuum of structural violence in respect to: (i) the bureaucratic procedures surrounding the identification, registration and asylum procedures; (ii) the degrading reception and living conditions inside detention centres, hotspots, and refugee camps, and more broadly inside Lesvos Island.
- Additionally, the thesis explores the EU responses towards the refugee crisis which were enforced through the lens of “a state of exception” (Agamben, 2005) and deterrence.
- The thesis also interrogates how the processes of naturalisation and normalisation, through official discourses and media representation, reduced the refugee crisis and border-related deaths into random, unforeseen, unpreventable events, and “tragic accidents” by minimising and subjugating the fact that they are all outcomes of political decisions.

Having Lesvos as a case study I explore the following research questions. *What are the forms of border harms and everyday violence border crossers experience at, within and beyond the borders? How border crossers’ experience everyday harm and violence on Lesvos? Why is not the everyday violence that border crossers experience more widely recognised and denounced by local and international observers/citizens/stakeholders? How violence and social harm border crossers experience render invisible?*

The research questions are partly shaped from my first-hand lived experiences for more than a decade as a local, activist and professional in detention centres in Greece and particularly on Lesbos. As my first-hand experiences indicated, border crossers on the one hand were confronted with multiple forms of harms and violence and at the same time they were coerced to make unbearable coerced choices (Chapters 4 and 5) -while *en route*, at, or within Europe- in order to secure safety and freedom. Border crossers, having escaped from violent contexts, found themselves in precarious, violent, harmful and life-threatening conditions, in closed detention centres, hotspots, and/or makeshift camps inside Europe. The violence that border crossers experienced mainly takes place quietly, vicariously, normally, routinely through bureaucratic, administrative procedures, through protracted spatial and temporal “stuckedness” (Hage, 2009b) and waiting, through everyday xenophobic violence from local population. Although everyday violence is widespread it has become normalised, unnoticeable and, therefore, is not perceived as violence. Hence, violence becomes more coercive, an embodied experience and, as Linda Green argues, it takes also the shape of a psychological terror, which haunts peoples’ lives by penetrating into their dreams as nightmares (Green, 1994, p. 246).

The research questions are further shaped from gaps in the existing literature. The existing academic literature which explores the phenomenon of the unauthorised border crossing is rich and focuses on a diverse range of issues from various perspectives. Most notably these include the following. Securitisation, criminalisation and illegalisation (Aas & Gundhus, 2015; Aas, 2005; Aliverti, 2012; Bigo, 2000, 2002, 2006; Bosworth & Guild, 2008; Mary Bosworth & Turnbull, 2014); detention and deportation (Bosworth, Hasselberg, & Turnbull, 2016; Fekete, 2005; Fili, 2016; Hasselberg, 2016; Khosravi, 2019); borders (Albahari, 2015a; Jones, 2016; Khosravi, 2007, 2011, Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, 2015a; Weber & Pickering, 2011), the autonomy of migration (De Genova, 2017; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007, 2013), humanitarianism (Fassin, 2011, 2012; Ticktin, 2016); prevention through deterrence, internalisation and externalisation (Akkerman, 2018; Andersson, 2014a, 2014b; Canning, 2017; De León, 2015; Frelick et al., 2016; Hess & Kasparek, 2017; Hyndman & Mountz, 2008; Mountz, 2012; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b); bureaucracy, structural violence, asylum procedures (Biehl, 2015; Canning, 2017; Griffiths, 2012; Gupta, 2012; Rozakou, 2017; Whyte, 2011); temporalities of migration and experiences of waiting (Andersson, 2014b; Canning, 2017; Griffiths, 2014; Griffiths et al., 2013; Haas,

2017; Hasselberg, 2016; Iliadou, 2012, 2017, 2018; Jefferson et al., 2018; Khosravi, 2018c, 2018a, 2014; Turnbull, 2016); death and grieving (Délano et al., 2016; Stierl, 2016) .

The thesis adds *empirically* to existing literature by critically examining the representation of the refugee crisis by policy makers and the mainstream media as a “state of exception” (Agamben, 1998). In the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis there is a limited but growing academic literature which critically focuses on the refugee crisis and the border regime. This focuses on the continuum of policies and political decisions in time and space which have shaped the conditions which have fostered the refugee crisis to unfold (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016; Frelick et al., 2016; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Noll, 2015; Pallister-Wilkins, 2016; Tazzioli, 2018; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b). But this thesis moves further by providing evidences of how the “refugee crisis” discourses were used in order violence towards disposable populations to be legitimised and normalised. To date, academic literature focusing on the long-term human consequences of this border regime and prevention through deterrence politics, which have been strengthened and proliferated in the aftermath of the refugee crisis, is limited (Albahari, 2015a; Andersson, 2014a; Davies et al., 2017; De León, 2015; Jones, 2016; Squire, 2017). Thus, although since 2015 Greece and particularly Lesvos has attracted much academic attention, there is limited academic literature which examines the aforementioned issues on the region. Therefore, this thesis also fills a gap in literature which focuses on the region of Greece and Lesvos by examining the human consequences of the border regime enforcements and the infliction of social harm.

There is also limited but growing academic literature focusing on the lived experiences of time and waiting beyond the refugee camps, which focuses on the temporal and spatial confinements beyond the institutional walls of the refugee camp, detention centre, hotspots and the lived experiences of border crossers in respect to time and waiting (Jefferson et al., 2018; Mountz, 2011b, 2012, Tazzioli, 2017, 2018; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). But in respect of time and waiting as a form of control which underpins the border regime and functions as deterrence tool and governance technique of the unauthorised human mobility, the academic literature is relatively limited (Andersson, 2014b; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018). Therefore this thesis fills a gap by documenting and showing the infliction of social harm due to the temporal border regime which has enforced states of “stuckedness” (Hage, 2009) and waiting upon border crossers. There is also limited academic literature which focuses on experience of time and waiting as a form of state violence (Iliadou, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2019). From this angle, the thesis fills a gap in

literature by showing that time and prolonged waiting is a tool of control and deterrence which inflicts multiple forms of harm upon border crossers. From this angle this thesis has argued that time and waiting is a form of state violence. Furthermore, this thesis fills a gap in literature by showing that time and waiting is a form of state violence which inflicts multiple forms of social harm even in death as well as beyond the moment of death.

This thesis is also novel *theoretically* in seeking to draw upon what have tended to be treated as distinct theoretical perspectives.

The thesis draws on and adds to a social harm approach (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Pemberton, 2015; Tombs, 2019) which is rooted in critical criminology. The social harm approach “overcomes the focus on crime and criminal law” (Tombs, 2019) and focuses instead on social harm. It examines various acts, incidents and events which are not considered “traditional” crimes, even though they generate harm upon people. Furthermore, they are not covered by the criminal law and when they do they are ignored or not handled accordingly (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007, p. 12). These non-“traditional” crimes can inflict serious and long-term harms, damage and suffering upon people throughout their life course, and particularly to those who live at the margins of the society (Tombs 2007; Hillyard & Tombs 2007, p.7–14 in Davies et al. 2014, p.246). These forms are considered as “non-conventional violence” (Lasslett, 2010; Pantazis & Pemberton, 2012; Tombs, 2007, 2015) and, hence, can be more coercive and deleterious. The social harm approach highlights social and structural factors as (non-conventional) violence, often taking the form of the exclusion from the basic human rights (Davies et al., 2014; Dorling et al., 2008; Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Tombs, 2015). According to Simon Pemberton social harm approach encompasses “physical”, “mental”, “health”, “relational”, and “autonomy” harms (2015, pp. 28–31). Physical and mental health harms refer to harms which can inflict death or deteriorate people’s physical and mental health by preventing them to “lead an active and successful life” (Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 59 in Pemberton, 2015, p. 28).

In this respect a range of physical injuries, accidents, exposure to harmful environmental conditions, diseases and conditions which can restrict people in formulating active choices inflict death or produce feeling of precariousness, helplessness, and worthlessness are considered as harms (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007, p. 17; Pemberton, 2015, pp. 28–29). In contradiction to Pemberton’s typology Paddy Hillyard and Steve Tombs refer to “physical” and “psychological/emotional” harms. They argue that psychological and emotional harms

refer to harms which generate anxiety and depression, (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Pemberton, 2015, p. 29). “Relational” harms come in two forms, “the enforced exclusion from social relationships and harms of misrecognition” (Pemberton, 2015, p. 30). The exclusion from social relationships can be proved particularly harmful since people cannot fulfill ordinary emotional needs. This can inflict feelings of social isolation and loneliness. Misrecognition is generated when people are reduced as “others” by the members of the dominant culture. Being treated as “others” people experience exclusion, misrepresentation, stigmatisation and degradation (Pemberton, 2015, p. 29). Autonomy harms are inflicted due to one’s inability of taking control of one’s life, to be active in the decision making- process, to actively engage within the labor market. All these features affect the self-esteem and self-worth of a person (Pemberton, 2015, pp. 29–30) and can produce feelings of worthlessness. “Autonomy” harms are inflicted when people’s achievements and contribution in the society is overlooked, misrecognised and unrewarded. The typology of harm also encompasses the “financial/economic” (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007, p. 17) and “cultural” harms (Copson, 2018; Tombs, 2019). “Financial/economic” harms encompass poverty and various forms of property and cash loss (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007, p. 17). Cultural harms as a concept is inadequately developed and thus there is not a single or unified definition (Copson, 2018, p. 3). Copson identifies three types of cultural harm: harms which are inflicted to a culture; by a culture and; harms of misrecognition (*ibid.*). The social harm approach is very helpful in the understanding of the lived experiences of border crossers and the range of harm and violence they experience within borderlands, buffer zones, isolate and remote thresholds, *en route* to Europe.

These insights from social harm perspective (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Pemberton, 2015; Tombs, 2019), rooted in critical criminology, are brought together with approaches which are concerned with the continuum of institutional and structural violence which are rooted in social anthropology, anthropology of structural violence (Farmer, 2004; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Scheper-Hughes, 1997) and the genocide studies (Duschinski, 2010; Green, 1994; Sabo et al., 2014; Scheper-Hughes, 1997). These approaches focus on the continuum of institutional and structural violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004; Scheper-Hughes, 1997) and encompass the ordinary and mundane processes, practices and acts of normalisation, routinisation, naturalisation, legitimisation, anonymity and bureaucratisation of violence, which render violence misrecognised, unnoticeable, invisible and taken for granted (Duschinski, 2010; Green, 1994; Sabo et al., 2014; Scheper-Hughes, 1997). This literature highlights the fact that violence is not always expressed through its

physicality as “violence to the body” (Poulantzas 1978b, p. 29 in Green & Ward, 2009, p. 116), but rather through its non-physicality, in an indirect and routinised way. This indirect and routinised way is not easily identified with the naked eye, and additionally tends to be more coercive.

Further, the social harm and structural violence perspectives are also considered with approaches which are concerned with the intersection between time, borders and space which are rooted in border studies, human and carceral geography (Donnan, Hurd, & Leutloff-Grandits, 2017; Green, 2009; Moran, 2012; Tazzioli, 2018). Those approaches highlight the synergy between borders, time and space twofold; (i) through the metaphor of the “line” which is related to walls, fences and barriers (Green, 2009); the metaphor of the “trace” which is related to the small, invisible and unnoticeable fragments, signs and memories of the borders which are left in space (*ibid.*); through the metaphor of “tidemark” which encompass both border lines and traces and which as Sarah Green argues “combines space and historical time, and envisages both space and time as being lively and contingent” (2009, p.17). (ii) Through the lived experiences of spatial and temporal confinements inside and even beyond carceral spaces (Moran, 2012b; Tazzioli, 2018). A central focus here is on the overlapping temporalities and spatialities which exist within carceral spaces and beyond them, and how they affect people in their everyday life (*ibid.*).

Therefore this thesis fills a gap by showing:

- (i) the range and multitude of social harm border crossers experience and their long-term consequences;
- (ii) that social harm and is inflicted upon the living and the dead.
- (iii) that institutional and structural violence unfolds as a continuum in (historical, past, present) time and space by multiplying and worsening existing harms and producing new types of harm;
- (iv) the memories, traces, marks, fragments and tidesmarks which the violent and harmful borders leave and inflict upon people and places;
- (v) how the spatial and temporal confinements beyond the institutional borders of the camp affect people’s lives in the form of a normalised, routinised everyday violence;

- (vi) the silent and quiet processes and circumstances which reduce and dehumanise some lives as unworthy and disposable, whose death or killing seems of little consequence.

1.1 Key Concepts

The key concepts which I have developed, introduced and will be discussed in this thesis are the following;

- The concepts of the continuum of institutional and structural violence and “everyday violence” which are rooted in social anthropology, genocide studies, border studies, human and carceral geography are central and traverse the whole thesis. They are particularly discussed in Chapter 3.
- The “Coerced Choices” concept in relation to “autonomy harms” is introduced, analysed and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.
- “Bureaucratic Deterrence” concept in relation to “bureaucratic violence” and deterrence is introduced, analysed and discussed in Chapter 5.
- “Despair Harms” concept is introduced, analysed and discussed in Chapter 5.
- The concept of “Violence of Stuckness and Waiting” as state violence is introduced, analysed and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.
- The “Spatial and Temporal Confinement beyond Detention and Carceral Continuum” concepts are discussed in Chapter 6.
- “Necroharm” concept in relation to state violence, social death and cultural harms is introduced and analysed in Chapters 6 and 7.
- “Thanatoharm” concept in relation to the thanatopolitical border regime is introduced and analysed in Chapter 7.

This thesis moves away from a traditional and rigid PhD structure which establishes the existence of a literature review chapter as a norm. This thesis moves away from this tradition and adopts a non-conventional structure. In this regard, the analyses of concepts and the theoretical discussion will be embedded separately in each chapter. In this way, repetition and overlaps between theoretical discussion in the literature review chapter and the rest of the thesis will be avoided.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

This is ethnographic research with aspects of autoethnography which seeks to explore border harms and the everyday violence border crossers experience *en route*, at and within the EU borders, in Lesvos. Apart from exploring the lived experiences of violence and harms within the Moria hotspot and other formal camps of Lesvos, this thesis moves beyond the institutional borders of the camp within Lesvos Island and seeks to identify the direct and indirect, conventional and non-conventional, every day and mundane forms of harm and violence, which kill people slowly, silently and softly. In this respect, the aims and objectives of this thesis are the following.

First, to explore the extent to which the refugee crisis discourse and sequence of events, has been deliberately abused by the EU policymakers in order to govern, prevent and deter the unauthorised border crosser. In the name of humanitarianism and “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005) EU policymakers imposed and legitimised brutal, obscene and violent politics, which violate human rights, liberties and cause physical and social death. I aim to explore the extent of which these politics are not something new, but they have for long time shaped the so-called EU border regime. Having Lesvos as a case study my main aim is to explore the extent to which harms, abjection, violence and deaths of border crossers, while traversing the various land and sea borders in order to reach Europe, are neither accidents nor unpredictable events, which take place as an outcome of the increased coerced displacement during the so-called refugee crisis (2015 onwards). On the contrary, they are the outcome of the continuum of the fatal and harmful EU policies and political decisions being enforced in time (past, present and future) and space for more than two decades.

Second, to explore how in the aftermath of the refugee crisis the EU border regime through externalisation and internalisation processes, has worked both at the external and, as the Lesvos case shows, the internal EU borders. My main purpose here is to explore how the EU border regime and a series of political decisions eventually (re)produced a Kafkaesque and structurally violent context with devastating and harmful consequences upon border-crossers’ lives; (i) at the external border zones through the proliferation and militarisation of border controls, bilateral and interstate agreements with authoritarian non-EU countries like Turkey and Libya; and (ii) at the internal EU borders through the establishment of a Kafkaesque, maze-like, mentally exhausting bureaucratic regime which dominates the registration, identification, international protection procedures, detention, deportation and the management of deaths.

Third, to identify the range of violence and harms border crossers experience beyond the institutional walls of the camp. My aim here is to explore the temporal and spatial confinements beyond the institutional walls of the camp, the temporal borders and temporal controls (Agier, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018) which inflict violence and harms to border crossers; more subtle, stealthy and obscene ones. My purpose is to explore the various forms of the “carceral continuum” (Foucault, 1975, p. 303) –everyday practices of policing, social control, panoptical surveillance and enforcement- beyond the camp inside Lesbos Island. In the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction regime, Lesbos has turned into a spatial and temporal confinement. My aim is to explore how the “carceral continuum” diffuses beyond detention “in the intimate and mundane spaces of the daily life” (Mountz, 2012, p. 83) of border crossers in Lesbos. Furthermore, Lesbos has turned into a spatial and temporal confinement where border crossers are locked up within “the border of time” (Agier, 2013, p. 23). Here, I aim to show the violent synergy between temporal and spatial borders, which confine border crossers lives by “stealing” (Khosravi, 2014, 2018b, 2018a), “spending, wasting border crossers’ time of their life” (Iliadou, 2017, 2018) through protracted legal limbo, misrecognition of achievements, precariousness and exclusion from protection, citizenship and rights.

Fourth, to explore the synergy of time and waiting as a “border technique” (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018) and as an integral feature of the temporal border regime; the discipline, regulation, management and governance of the undesirable human mobility through time (Tazzioli, 2018; Walters, 2016) and “stuckedness” (Hage, 2009b). Here, I focus on the slow-paced bureaucratic procedures which are characterised by temporal deadlines, time lags, postpones and cancellations, and which trap border crossers to a protracted temporal stuckedness (Jefferson, Turner, & Jensen, 2018; Tazzioli, 2018). My aim is to explore the extent to which “the violence of stuckedness and waiting” is a deliberate technique being enforced by the EU policy makers in order to; (i) regulate, discipline, govern and control the undesirable border crossers; (ii) to mentally exhaust them by making their lives unliveable in order to deter them from coming, staying or moving further to Europe. Thus, my aim is to explore the extent of which this violent synergy between time, waiting and stuckedness is state violence.

Fifth, to show how and why the multiple forms of harm and violence are avoidable and as such they all are manifestations of state violence.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 is the Introduction where I also explain the aims and objectives, the theoretical framework and the structure of the thesis. In Chapter 2, I discuss methodology and provide a detailed account of how I did the research, what methods I used and what barriers I confronted during my research. Chapter 3 is an account of the continuum of coerced border crossings, violence and harms of the bureaucratic and asylum procedures, reception and living conditions in space (Greece and Lesvos) and (past) time. This chapter provides a detailed account of the border harms and everyday violence border crossers were experiencing in Lesvos and Greece before the so-called refugee crisis of 2015. This chapter is pivotal since it focuses on the continuum of violence and everyday violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004) in time and space. These are the main arguments which traverse the whole thesis. This chapter is also based on the concept of traces and tidemarks also framed as border crossing monuments in the Vignette section. Chapter 4 explores the externalisation, internalisation and deterrent policies and how they have been proliferated in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis. This chapter provides an account of the range of harm that EU policies inflict upon border crossers in order to make their lives unliveable and deter them from coming, staying or moving forward to Northern Europe. Through this lens I move to Chapter 5 which is divided into two parts. In Part I, I focus on harms inflicted upon border crossers due to the overwhelming bureaucratisation, procedural chaos, inconsistency and uncertainty, enduring waiting and queuing, capricious and mentally exhausting registration, identification and asylum procedures, which border crossers must live through while living in harmful, life threatening, degrading reception and living conditions. Part II, focuses on the harmful and structurally violent, degrading living conditions within the Moria hotspot that border crossers must endure while waiting to complete various bureaucratic and asylum procedures. Chapter 6 addresses the notion of confinement beyond detention and the violence of enduring waiting. This chapter focuses on the strategies and technologies of confinement, social control and violence outside of the Moria hotspot within Lesvos Island which, after the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction regime, has turned into a spatial and temporal confinement and limbo, where instead of walls and iron bars there is the deep blue sea. In this chapter I also focus on the temporal border and controls which are enforced in order to govern unwanted human mobility through temporality, and I emphasise on the dominant feature of temporal controls which is the infliction of stuckness and enduring waiting. Stuckness and waiting will be analysed as a form of state violence. In Chapter 7 I examine the politics of death, deterrence and the governing of

the unwanted human mobility through violence, abandonment and death. I provide a detailed account of the range of harms inflicted upon border crossers due to the thanatopolitical border regime, which I name them as thanatoharms. I then move to discuss the necroharm and violence inflicted on border crossers by condemning them to social death. I discuss here the abandonment of border crossers to a silent, quiet and protracted social death. Finally, Chapter 8 presents my Conclusions, where I summarise and discuss the main arguments of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

In this Chapter I will focus on the pathways of inquiry I traversed in order to conduct my PhD thesis. In terms of methodology, the research adopts an in depth- qualitative approach drawing on ethnography and auto-ethnography methods, thematic, and secondary analysis of qualitative data. In terms of epistemology this thesis deploys a constructionist epistemology which views knowledge as socially constructed through people's meaning-making, and also considers the relationship between knowledge and power (Potter, 2006, p. 80). In the following sections I analyse the methods I deployed in order to conduct the research and the methodological tools I used in order to collect and analyse my data. I also provide a detailed account of the ethical issues and barriers I confronted throughout the research process.

2.1 Pathways of Inquiry: The Research Approach

Qualitative research and its methodological tools (ethnography, participant observation, qualitative interviews) (Bryman, 2016, p. 377, 378) are considered to be the most suitable approach, when researching sensitive topics such as border crossers' lived experiences of the multilayered forms of harms in Lesvos. Qualitative research can provide insights not easy to attain by other means. According to Denzin and Lincoln a generic definition for qualitative research is as follows,

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 4).

Qualitative research is a pathway of inquiry which the researcher traverses in order to "understand the world through the eyes of the participants" (Bryman 2016, p. 401) by focusing on people's own meanings, understandings and interpretation of their experience and the world (see Bryman 2016, p. 3). Mason argues that,

Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institution discourses or relationships work and the significance of the meanings that they generate (Mason, 2002, p. 1).

A combination of mixed methods/multi-method described also by the term “triangulation” (Bell, 1999; Bryman, 2016; Denzin, 1970) is also deployed in this research. Based upon the fact that “objective reality can never been captured” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5), qualitative research’s multi-method “nature” in practice reflects the anxiety of the researcher to reassure and secure the validity of her/his findings. According to Flick (2002), “the use of multiple methods or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). However, Flick notes that triangulation mainly serves as an alternative way of validation. In order to analyse and deeply understand the range of social harm border crossers experience on Lesvos and also in order to highlight the continuum of violence in time (past, present, future) and space I am deploying an ethnographic research approach which includes observation and semi-structured interviews. At the same time my research also has aspects of auto-ethnography which is mainly deployed through the technique of vignettes (see Section 2.6.1), which occupy separate sections in the beginning of each chapter. Through vignettes, I am placing myself and my lived experiences -as local, activist and aid worker on Lesvos in the past- into the research.

2.1.1 Ethnography

Ethnography is a research approach commonly deployed in social anthropological research and principally includes the involvement of the researcher in the “social life of those he or she studies” (Bryman, 2016, p. 422). According to Jennifer Mason ethnography is “about the study of culture (or similar concepts), and is based on an epistemology which says that culture can be known through cultural and social settings” (Mason, 2002, p. 55). Ethnographers are often described as immersing themselves within the field or social setting for an extended period of time (full-scale ethnography). Ethnographic immersion into the field or a social setting has been described by Bronislaw Malinowski; in his essay, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Malinowski wrote, “Imagine yourself, suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight” (Holmes & Marcus in Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 1099). However, not only did Malinowski see the importance

of a researcher's emergence in the field or social setting but he also saw the importance of becoming "native", that is to say to do participant observation by living with the informants and experiencing their way of life. The term "going native" is linked with Malinowski and has become the origin of field work and field method (in O' Reilly 2009). Although, the idea of "going native" has been challenged as an indication of bias and "loss of all objectivity" (in O' Reilly 2009) as well as an example of a language and attitude linked with colonial anthropology (Narayan, 1993, p. 672; O' Reilly, 2009), emphasis is given on the importance of researcher's first-hand experiences and observations (Atkinson et al., 2001, p. 5; Bryman, 2016; Mason, 2002). Furthermore, as Atkinson et al. (2001) note, fieldwork apart from observation entails other forms of collecting data by combining other forms of interaction. According to Atkinson et al.,

In principle, indeed, the ethnographer may find herself or himself drawing on a very diverse repertoire of research techniques – analysing spoken discourse and narratives, collecting and interpreting visual materials (including photography, film and video), collecting oral history and life history material and so on (2001, p. 5)

Bryman distinguishes four types of ethnography depending on whether the social setting under research is open or closed and consequently if the access to it is easy -and thus the role of the researcher overt- or restrain and thus the role of the researcher covert (Bryman, 2016, p. 425). Mason on the other hand distinguishes the following types of ethnography. The "interpretivist approaches" which are based on people, their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings, as the primary data source (Mason, 2002, p. 56). The "biographical, life history and humanist approaches" wherein people and specifically their life stories are the primary source of data which according to Mason can be told in verbal, documentary or other visual ways (*ibid.*). The "Conversation analysis and discourse analysis" where a central and common feature is the emphasis on talk and text as main source of data and not human action (Mason, 2002, p. 57). The "psychoanalytic approaches" within which as Mason argues, "People are, therefore, data sources, but the methods used – be they interviews or otherwise – have to provide access to the inner or unconscious subject" (Mason, 2002, p. 58). Atkinson et al., however, challenge the various typologies and categorisations of ethnographic research which are grouping and producing generalisations through "lists" because as they argue they can ultimately do more harm than good. As Atkinson et al. note, "They can serve useful pedagogical functions, but can ultimately do violence to the complexities of research and its historical development" (2001, p. 2).

2.1.2 Autoethnography

In their essay *Autoethnography: An Overview*, Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams and Arthur Bochner define autoethnography as “an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (in Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). One key feature, which all autoethnographies share is the use of researchers’ personal experiences throughout the research process in order to examine and understand the cultural experience (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2016, p. 22). By using ethnography and personal/autobiographical features autoethnography as a method consists of both a process and product (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). As Ellis and Adams argue,

Autoethnography refers to research, writing, stories, and methods that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political. This approach considers personal experience as an important source of knowledge in and of itself, as well as a source of insight into cultural experience (2014, p. 2).

Autoethnography challenges the notion of “silent authorship”, which practically connotes an oxymoron; the “absence presence” of the researcher and researcher’s voice from the research process and within the presentation of findings (Denshire, 2014; Holt, 2003). Often researcher’s “squeezed presence” only prevails within a short section in a methodology chapter. In autoethnography on the contrary, the researcher includes herself in her own work. In this sense the researcher becomes a part of, and also data, within the research process (Ellis & Adams, 2014; Ellis et al., 2011; Pace, 2012; Wall, 2006). Autoethnographies are, after all, “highly personalised accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding” (Custer, 2014; Ellis & Adams, 2014; Pace, 2012; Sparkes, 2000, p. 21 in Wall 2006, p.2). Auto-ethnography’s main features are reflection or reflexivity, empathy and introspection. Alvesson and Sköldberg in year 2000 distinguish “reflection” from “reflexivity” in empirical research although in the foreword of their book they suggest a common definition for both. As Alvesson and Sköldberg argue,

Reflection (reflexivity) is thus above all a question of recognising fully the notoriously ambivalent relation of a researcher’s text to the realities studied. Reflection means interpreting one’s own interpretations, looking at one’s perspectives from other perspectives, and turning a self-critical eye onto one’s own authority as interpreter and author (2000, p. vii).

However, reflexivity, introspection, self-consciousness, empathy are main features of the ethnographic research which expands, as Carolyn Ellis argues, in order to include the heart along with the autobiographical, and the artistic text. Through this lens ethnography becomes a “heartful” autoethnography (Ellis, 1999; Ellis & Patti, 2014). As Ellis and Adams argue autoethnography can be deployed with multiple, variable ways

Claiming the conventions of literary writing, autoethnography features concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterization, and plot. Autoethnography can take a variety of forms, including short stories, poetry, performance, new media, art, and multivoiced work, such as collaborative autoethnography (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2012), co-constructed narrative (Bochner & Ellis, 1995), and collaborative witnessing (Ellis & Rawicki, 2013) (2014, p. 2).

Autoethnography engages with a body of scholarship opposed to the “neutrality” and “objectivity” of traditional social research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011; Ellis & Adams, 2014) and which also rejects as Ellis and Adams argue, “the idea that ethnographers should hide behind or perpetuate an aura of objectivity and innocence” (Ellis & Adams 2014). Autoethnography echoes the “crisis of representation” period in social inquiry and raises the problematic issue of “empirical science’s hegemony” (Clough, 1998, p. 8 in Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 27; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Ellis & Adams, 2014, p. 8) and the production and construction of knowledge on behalf of the researcher. Bias and social and hierarchical power relations based on class, gender and race are more than likely to be produced during the research process. As Richardson puts it,

Wherever text is being produced, there is the question of what social, power and sexual relationships are being reproduced? How does our writing reproduce a system of domination and how does it challenge that system? For whom do we speak, and to whom, with what voice, to what end, using what criteria? (1998, p. 57).

Autoethnography addresses the issue of ethics of researching and representing others in the epicentre, a key feature which emerged in the aftermath of moral violations in traditional social sciences scientific fields and the potential exploitation of people being studied (Ellis & Adams 2014, p. 9). Questions that emerged have to do with the moral responsibility of the researchers towards people and populations they study, and the boundaries within the research practice under which the approach of “the end justifies the means” is challenged. At the same time, as Ellis and Adams observe, “Concerns about research being an invasive

and oppressive colonialist enterprise is directly connected with the ethics of researching and representing others” (2014, p. 11).

Autoethnographic and ethnographic approaches focusing on the lived experiences of border crossers have been successfully used in previous studies (Khosravi, 2007, 2010, 2017; Andersson, 2014; Squire, 2014, 2017; Dutta, 2015; Hasselberg, 2016). In terms of this thesis I chose to deploy ethnographic research with aspects of autoethnography and thus to explore “subjectivity”, that is to say, as Ellis and Flaherty argue, the “human lived experience and the physical, political and historical context of that experience” (1992, p. 1). This thesis is not dealing exclusively around my personal stories and lived experiences but mainly on the lived experiences and the voices of border crossers -the oppressed, survivors and revolting agents of the cruel border regime. My first-hand lived experiences are mainly presented in the form of vignettes, which are evocative narratives in the beginning of each chapter (see Section 2.6.1). The reason for that is, firstly, in order to provide “illuminate nuances” (Ellis & Rawicki, 2013 in Ellis & Adams 2014, p. 12) from my experiences as local, activist, and social worker supporting border crossers on Lesvos; and secondly, in order to focus on and highlight the lived experiences of border crossers as well as, in Ellis and Rawicki’s words, “to honor and respect those being studied and to work alongside and with them rather than to invade and do research on them” (Ellis & Rawicki, 2013 in Ellis & Adams 2014, p. 12). In this respect in this autoethnography I am exploring and analysing border crossers’ lived experiences concerning violence and harm alongside my personal lived experiences as;

- a former human rights worker with various Non-Governmental Organisations at Lesvos Island between 2008 and 2013.
- an activist and politically involved in grassroots and human rights movements at Lesvos, between 2008 and 2015, and
- a student, who returns to the field with the identity of the researcher in order to understand and explore the range of social harm inflicted upon border crossers.

Throughout this thesis I deploy autoethnography’s principles “(...) personal experience, acknowledging existing research, understanding and critiquing cultural experience, using insider knowledge, breaking silence, and maneuvering through pain, confusion, anger, and uncertainty” (Ellis & Adams, 2014, p. 49). In this respect, I am not just situating myself within the research, but I am introspecting, reflecting and analysing upon my own

positionality and various different positionalities within time and space. In this regard, emotions, personal thoughts, reflections, prejudices, ethical, political considerations and dilemmas will be critically discussed and will challenge the way my presence as a researcher, my bias and prejudices can emerge into the field and construct the knowledge being produced. That is to say, I recognise “the role of the researcher as part and parcel of the construction of knowledge” (Bryman 2016, p. 388, see also Walls 2006). Furthermore, drawing upon “the concept of witnessing” (Khosravi, 2011, p. 6) I am not just locating myself within the research process. I serve also as an eyewitness, as one who confirms what participants say by testifying what I know from my first-hand experiences as a researcher, local, activist and former social worker. As Khosravi argues, “the significance of the voice of the witness is that the witness has been there, has seen what happened. Witnesses have themselves lived the disaster and might themselves be victims. They can retell the story and unfold the event with first-hand authority” (*ibid.*).

Between 2008 and 2015, prior to my research I have experienced and witnessed multilayered forms of harm and violence due to activism in grassroots movements and local networks supporting border crossers on Lesbos as well as due to the aid work in detention centres for border crossers in Greece and particularly on Lesbos. During these years I have not only witnessed and documented systematic abuses and violations of human rights, the pain and suffering of others, and deaths of people seeking international protection by the hands of the Greek authorities and more broadly by the proliferating border regime. During my work as social worker in Pagani Detention Centre on Lesbos I have also been sexually harassed, exposed to verbal violence -in the form of shouting and screams- and other forms of symbolic violence and “punishments” by the Greek authorities and other staff, which amounted to degrading, humiliating and dehumanising treatment. Furthermore, my exposure to violence was continuous even beyond the institutional walls of detention and came into being through practices of everyday intimidation and permeation in the sphere of my private life. I was watched, stalked and harassed, receiving life threats, and photographed without consent in public spaces of Lesbos by the Greek authorities. My personal experiences in relation to violence and harm were in many cases comparable to many border crossers’ experiences before and throughout the research which I analyse in the following chapters.

2.2. Research Setting: Lesbos Island

The case study of my research is Lesvos Island in Greece. Over the last decade Lesvos constitutes a main entry point for border crossers, escaping from conflicts, wars, authoritarianism and violence in order to seek for sanctuary in Europe. Although, there are also other Greek islands, like Samos and Chios, in proximity to Turkey, the vast majority of border crossers are arriving to Greece mainly through Lesvos. During 2015, more than 850,000 border crossers arrived by sea to Greece and approximately 500,000 via Lesvos (see Chapter 1). Currently, there are approximately 30,000 border crossers arrived in Greece through the Greek islands and (UNHCR updates as with 9 December 2018). Whilst, approximately 14,214 people are currently trapped on Lesvos (*ibid.*) in limbo and precariousness inside open access camps, packed into hotspots, police stations or living in homelessness and destitution.

Lesvos is located in the North-Eastern Aegean Sea at the borders with Turkey (see map below). It is the third largest island in Greece with a general population of 86,436. The capital of Lesvos is the city of Mytilene. During 2015, in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis, approximately 100 International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) arrived, semi-settled and operated at Lesvos, in order to assist to the management of migration flows (Skleparis & Armakolas, 2016). At the time of writing, the numbers of INGOs which operate at the island have been decreased due to the declining number of border crossers arriving. In the aftermath of the refugee crisis, Frontex and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enhanced their operations in order to prevent unauthorised border crossing (NATO, 2016). Greece and Lesvos Island play and will continue playing a pivotal role as the external European frontiers, as a manifestation of Fortress Europe.



Image 1. Map of Greece and Lesvos (Source: "Lesvos Map/ Google Maps," n.d. reproduced in Gillespie et al., 2016)

My research was mainly held in the city of Mytilene. The reason I chose Mytilene is because all public services are there, as well as the central Police station, the central Coastguard, Frontex's and Non-Governmental and International Organisations' offices. Furthermore, within Mytilene is the only port which links the island with Athens (the capital of Greece) and North Greece. The port of Mytilene is the main exit option from the island and a space of control, whereas police officers and coastguard officers are always located in order to watch police and control the daily movement of people and goods. Therefore, the port of Mytilene is an invisible border in which the vast majority of border crossers are gathered, so as to make their travel arrangements, legally and sometimes illegally, in front of the eyes of the authorities. Additionally, in the city of Mytilene and the surrounding areas one can find the two camps of PIKPA Solidarity and Kara Tepe as well as the Moria hotspot. Mytilene's public sites and squares are spaces of struggle and resistance where protests, demonstrations and (hunger) strikes are taking place. They are also spaces of socialisation where various social events take place. At the same time, Mytilene's public spaces and squares are places where border crossers socialise, hang around and generally wait.

2.3 Research process

The research process entailed four main phases. Each phase involved two inseparable processes; the process of "entering the field" and "negotiating access" to people and sites. I am distinguishing the following phases;

- A "scoping" phase between 17 October and 31 October 2016
- A field trip phase between 17 January 2017 and 2 February 2017
- A second field trip phase between 8 May 2017 and 1 June 2017
- A 'Leaving the field' phase

Each phase's main characteristic was a perpetual struggle in gaining access to people and sites. I say "struggle" because negotiating access was sometimes easy but at some other times was very difficult and painful. This particular issue emerged and re-emerged multiple times throughout the research process by highlighting how my "nativeness" itself can become a problem, barrier and obstacle in gaining access to people and sites. Within this context it also raises the question, "how native a native researcher is" (Narayan, 1993). "Negotiating access" and "entering the field" were not accomplished all at once. I repeatedly had to proceed in "negotiations" with the same or multiple agents by being in a constant and systematic preparation, by contacting people both formally and informally before and during each phase and within the whole research process. I confronted multiple

barriers, boundaries and invisible borders throughout the research process and during the field work to such an extent that I can speak for multiple “enterings” into the field. In this sense, there is no strict and clear “research phase typology” which I followed, since within each phase there were several different and smaller phases to which I had to adapt. Thus, the “research phase typology” I present here is more for methodological clarity and not a precise reflection of reality.

Furthermore, during the research process I spent time doing observation in social events and workshops organised by activists and other agents. At the same time, I spent time with activists, volunteers, and border crossers from my pre-established network in open access camps, social and public spaces. In many instances people from my pre-established network served as key informants, since a rapport was already achieved. During the fourth phase I left the field after a large amount of data, interviews, field notes, visual data (photos and videos), and primary written material had been gathered.

2.3.1 Entering the field

In order to carry out the research I initially conducted a scoping journey of two weeks duration in Lesbos. During this phase I was more concerned to explore what kinds of data I could collect, to identify and approach participants, to identify potential barriers and restrictions in gaining access to sites and people in order to think and design alternatives which would help me to overcome such barriers. During the scoping phase, I chose to approach my informants indirectly and informally, mainly from my pre-established network, as I thought it would be easier for them to give me an interview anonymously and with no prior approval and involvement from the NGOs’ headquarters. During the scoping phase I spent a lot of time conducting participant observation at social events taking place in public spaces, protests and demonstrations, collecting visual data (photos and videos). From my observations and in-depth field discussions I kept detailed field notes. Data from field notes and in-depth field note discussions, and observations is analysed in this thesis. From this scoping phase several different sites were identified and chosen to be included in the research process, as follows.

PIKPA Solidarity Lesbos Camp: PIKPA camp is coordinated by activists and volunteers. It is an autonomous and self-organised site which mainly hosts families with children and border crossers with serious health problems (Solidarity Lesbos, 2018). PIKPA is not a space of control and provides sanctuary, social and medical support to people. Because PIKPA is not a space of control, people staying there are calmer, relaxed and keen to be interviewed.

Mosaic Social Support Centre: Mosaic is coordinated by activists and volunteers. Many of Mosaic's members are also members of *PIKPA Solidarity Lesbos Camp*. Mosaic is not a camp but a social centre which is self-organised and autonomous, whilst its members support border crossers through various cultural activities, for instance, free language courses, yoga classes, guitar lessons, poetry workshops, social events, screenings, and political discussions (Mitsou, 2018). Mosaic hosts the Legal Centre Lesbos -a network of lawyers who provide free legal aid to border crossers (Legal Centre Lesbos, n.d.)- as well as the lifejacket workshop in which abandoned lifejackets and dinghies are collected and recycled into bags (Gillespie, 2018; Solidarity Lesbos, 2018). Mosaic is an open space for both border crossers and locals.

Kara Tepe Camp: Kara Tepe camp is coordinated by the Municipality. It mainly hosts families with children and "vulnerable" people. Although, the coordination of the camp is in the hands of Lesbos' municipality, there are also various NGOs which are involved in the daily operation of the space. Border crossers move freely inside and outside the camp, can walk to the city centre and return to Kara Tepe. Two cantinas are permanently operating outside the camp where border crossers hang around and wait. Kara Tepe is not a space of control in the narrow sense since it is not a prison. There are no police and people move freely in and out of the camp. There are however gatekeepers who monitor by allowing or not the access to the site. Furthermore, the camp is surrounded by fences.

Moria Hotspot: The Moria hotspot is a closed site for some border crossers and an open site for others (see Chapters 5 and 6) which currently operates in Lesbos. It is a complex space of control where various agents, services and organisations operate; the Police, Frontex, the Asylum Service, UNHCR, IOM, various NGOs, public servants, non-permanent staff, and G4S, a private security company (see Chapter 4). The hotspot is located in a former military base where the army has a discreet role and presence. Inside Moria hotspot the identification, screening, registration, asylum and various other bureaucratic and administrative procedures take place. Additionally, the hotspot includes a detention commonly referred as the "Section B" and while some border crossers are detained there some others are free to move outside and hang around at the various cantinas which operate near the hotspot.

The Port: The port was an interesting site for observation since throughout the research process it operated both as a port and an informal prison for border crossers. Iron bars were located in the periphery of the port making the port look like a cage and a closed detention centre. Police officers were located there as gatekeepers, whilst a former old navy ship was

anchored there and served as a refugee camp accommodating approximately 300 border crossers. The port was also a space of daily transactions and arrangements, of hope and cancellation (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2) since many border crossers gathered there in order to find a way to hid in a truck and board to a ship for Athens.

Public Spaces, the Streets and Walls: Public spaces, squares, the streets, and coffee shops where border crossers, activists, volunteers and NGO staff gathered, worked and were generally hanging around were a very important part of my research and a valuable source in terms of data collection. Sappho's Square at the main street of the city of Mytilene is a meeting point for local and non-local people. Border crossers gather there and socialise, whilst several social events and protests take place there (hunger strikes, protests, demonstrations and occupations to social and collective cooking with provision of free meal to all people) (see Chapter 6). Public spaces, squares and streets are sites of political struggle and resistance. Anti-fascist, anti-racist festivals and protests take place in public spaces as well as protests against the "financial crisis". The walls of the buildings within the main streets and sideways of the city of Mytilene were a valuable source of data too. Since 2015, the walls within the city centre have been monopolised by numerous colourful political slogans, posters, graffiti and street art which altogether form another kind of narrative concerning everyday violence, social harm, the refugee crisis and of course the normalised financial crisis. At the same time, the walls were narrating and revealing untold and unseen aspects of border related harms. As Shahram Khosravi argues,

What appears on the walls (written, drawn, in the form of a poster or a sticker) are central, in Ranciere's (2010) meaning, to politics since they redistribute the sensible by visibilizing the invisible and making the inaudible audible. This politicises the walls, no matter if the message is a political slogan, graffiti, or a job notice in the informal sector. Walls hide what is behind them but, at the same time, display the unseen (2017, p. 173).

Important public spaces were, for me, the coasts and beaches surrounding the city centre of Mytilene. Coasts and beaches have been gradually transformed into landfills and cemeteries of abandoned life jackets, plastic dinghies and other personal belongings of border crossers – the *refugee waste* (Gillespie, 2018, p. 150). These sites and abandoned objects are for me hallmarks of the thousands of border crossings and exemplars of violent borders and death produced by the border regime (Chapter 4 and 7). Similar to the graffiti on the walls, abandoned lifejackets, plastic dinghies and personal belongings revealed another aspect and narrative of harm and violence, the most macabre, degrading and dehumanised one; human lives as waste, and the wasted lives due to the thanatopolitical

border regime (Chapter 7). I also conducted a fieldtrip to the Lifejacket's Graveyard, which is a dump where lifejackets and dinghies are disposed (Gillespie, 2018).

After scoping and exploring possibilities, barriers and restrictions I continued with the next phase of my research which was to negotiate access. This phase was complex and a non-linear one.

2.3.2 Negotiating access

Prior to and throughout the whole research process and phases I traversed both formal and informal pathways in order to gain access mainly to International and Non-Governmental Organisations, the authorities, other state services and sites. In order to do that, I sent Invitation Letters and Consent Forms to INGOs, Frontex, the Mayor's office to request interviewing the Mayor and access to Kara Tepe Camp, the European Asylum Office (EASO), the Asylum Service and to the First Reception Centre Service to request access to Moria hotspot and an interview with the coordinator (see Appendices). In some cases, I contacted state services offices' and key gatekeepers by phone or in person in order to request access. I was mainly advised by them to contact gatekeepers and services by email. In most of the cases where the state² was involved access to people and sites was denied to me since my formal requests were ignored with responses still pending. The state was the most important gatekeeper within the whole research process along with a few NGOs. In some instances, I must admit that I overcame the state's and other gatekeepers' power who were constantly raising (invisible) borders by preventing me gaining access to sites and people due to serendipity and persistence.

2.3.3 Leaving the field

I completed a two months fieldwork with in-between "breaks" back to the UK. During the "break" periods, I transcribed the data I had collected during each visit. I also undertook an initial thematic analysis by identifying emerging issues deriving. By the time I completed the final phase of my fieldwork, between 8 May 2017 and 1 June 2017, I had already collected 60 in-depth interviews (Section 2.4), 445 photos of graffiti, disposed lifejackets and objects at the shores, 35.831 words of field notes and other primary data like information leaflets, leaflets and political brochures. Due to the complex and capricious nature of the field, the law and policies which surround the phenomenon of the unauthorised border crossing in Greece and Lesvos and the plethora of data concerning the scale of harm and violence I decided to put an end to the data collection by acknowledging:

² Depending on whose jurisdiction, I am referring both to the local authorities and the Greek authorities in general.

- the limitations of my research project.
- the amount and content of the data I had already collected was immense and rich and if I would collect more I would not be able to handle and manage it.
- that I would not be able to handle the emotional risk which is overwhelming when one researches sensitive topics.

2.4 Population of Interest

Within this research setting the main population of interest is the people who fall into the legal (non-) status of the “border crosser”. However, due to the complexity and difficulties arising from the sensitive nature of my research and in some instances related to gaining access to this population, other agents were also identified, approached and included into my research. In this regard, I interviewed people from; (i) International and Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs); (ii) Activists and volunteers who advocate and support border crossers; (iii) Border crossers; (iv) FRONTEX; (v) The Asylum Service; (vi) The Medical Forensic Examiner; (vii) Imams. Recruitment of participants was based on their relevance to the research questions that my study aimed to explore (see Bryman, 2016, p. 408). In order to recruit potential participants I deployed a combination of theoretical and snowball sampling. Therefore, participants were border crossers (adult women and men), who have moved through Lesvos or were living at Lesvos (mainly in Mytilene, the capital of Lesvos), inside detention centers and/or (open access or makeshift) camps and/or public sites, waiting to regularize their legal status or to make arrangements to continue their journey further into Europe. Thus, participants were identified and approached in these sites and in the first instance they were verbally informed about me and my research and were asked if they consent to participate.

According to Atkinson et al.,

theoretical sampling means going back to the field to gather specific data to fill gaps within categories to elaborate the analysis of these categories, and to discover variation within and between them. This sampling is aimed to develop a theoretical analysis or to fill out ethnographers’ accounts or stories, not to approximate any statistical representation of the population parameters (2001, p. 168)

As I explained in section 2.3 I conducted my research process in stages. Each stage was a continuous and parallel process of collecting data, transcribing, coding, analysing and deciding of what next in order to develop the theory as it emerges (see Bryman, 2016, p. 408). Furthermore, at the end of each phase I was evaluating my data in order to assess

whether or not saturation has been accomplished (*ibid.*). By the end of the final fieldtrip to Lesvos there were no any new emerging themes with the additional data identified and, therefore, saturation and variation was established (*ibid.*). After the data analysis procedure came to an end a variety of themes emerged and the process of inclusion selection was based upon which themes were repetitively coming into view.

2.4.1 Border crossers

Border crossers were identified and approached firstly, via my pre-established network (mainly activists, volunteers and human rights workers); secondly, outside of Moria Hotspot, Kara Tepe Camp, Pikpa Solidarity Lesvos, Mosaic Social Support Centre and in other public spaces; and thirdly, via snowball sampling. Gaining access to border crossers was easier than I expected and the only barriers I was confronted with were those erected by gatekeepers (INGO practitioners and the state. Due to the complexity of the situation surrounding the phenomenon of unauthorised border crossing at Lesvos Island and due to the fact that asylum and bureaucratic procedures were and still are constantly shifting, thus affecting the legal status of border crossers, I had to pursue a series of simultaneous pathways. Firstly, I had to identify and distinguish those who were trapped within an “old” asylum system in a state of limbo (between the “old” and the “new” asylum system), and those who were trapped within the “new” asylum system (Chapter 5). Participants who were trapped within the old asylum procedure were in a state of enduring “stuckedness”, as Ghassan Hage phrases it (Hage, 2009a; see Chapter 5 and 6) waiting in a constant negotiation of their (legal) existence and (legal, social) status for more than a decade. Secondly, I identified participants according to the emerging issues and themes which emerged during the research process. I decided to interview border crossers who apart from being trapped in multiple limbos (territorial, legal, bureaucratic, social, mental, existential) undertook various complex tasks, such as interpreting, intermediating, raising awareness, speaking with journalists, researchers and the press, and representing their community in meetings with the authorities (Chapter 6). Some others performed the macabre rituals of giving care to dead bodies, burying the dead, performing the funeral rituals and coordinating the border crossers’ cemetery (Chapter 7). Overall, I conducted 24 in-depth and 2 additional follow-up interviews with adult border crossers, two women and twenty men, between 18 and 55 years old. The participants were people who were trapped in the new asylum system and six out of them were trapped in the old system. The average length of the interviews were between forty minutes (shortest) and one hour and a half (longest).

All participants' names were anonymised. All the names which are used in the thesis are pseudonyms.

Country of Origin	Gender
New Asylum System	
Afghanistan	Woman
Afghanistan	Man
Afghanistan	Man
Pakistan	Man
Pakistan	Man
Iran	Man
Iran	Man
Iraq	Man
Palestine	Man
Eritrea	Man
Mali	Man
Syria	Man
Syria	Woman
Syria	Man
Ghana	Man
Ghana	Man
Ghana	Man
Nigeria	Man
Old Asylum System	
Afghanistan	Man
Afghanistan	Man
Afghanistan	Man
Afghanistan	Man
Morocco	Man
Afghanistan	Man

Table 1: Adult border crossers who were interviewed, by Country of Origin and Gender

2.4.2 International and Non- Governmental Organisations

International and Non- Governmental Organisations' staff was approached both formally and informally. I initially approached practitioners from my pre-established network during the scoping phase but also throughout the research process. Due to my long term experience in working with NGOs I knew from first-hand that the headquarters of NGOs do not easily approve interviews directly with staff themselves, but only with spokespersons. I also knew that many organisations either ignore formal requests from students or avoid taking part in researches by claiming heavy work-loads. In this respect, and in order to avoid wasting time only to be eventually ignored or declined I thought that it would be relatively easy to conduct interviews with NGO staff by following an informal pathway, and then through snowball sampling I would be able to approach and interview more practitioners. However, in practice throughout the fieldwork I engaged with both formal and informal pathways in order to identify and approach my participants, mainly depending on the participants' personal circumstances and needs. Before I approached and recruited any of the (I)NGO staff I explored which organisations were operating at Lesbos Island in order to identify which were relevant to my research. Then an invitation letter, an information leaflet and consent form (see Appendices) was sent to each recipient. Some NGO practitioners preferred to speak anonymously and/or without being recorded. I conducted 10 in-depth interviews and 2 supplementary follow-up interviews in order to clarify issues and answer questions which emerged after the transcription and the initial thematic analysis. The participants were 7 women and 3 men between 26 and 45 years old. The average length of the interviews was between one hour (shortest) and one hour and a half (longest). All participants and the names of their organisation are anonymised. All the names which are used in the thesis are pseudonyms.

2.4.3 Activists and Volunteers

Personal accounts and experiences of activists and volunteers supporting border crossers were essential in my research. Activists and volunteers are "bare witnesses" of the multiple forms of violence and harm which border crossers experience in their everyday life. I followed both an informal and formal pathway in order to approach activists and volunteers. Initially, I approached people, activists and volunteers from my pre-established network. Then with a snowball approach I was able to identify and conduct interviews with other activists and volunteers. I conducted 11 in-depth and 2 supplementary follow-up interviews with 8 women and 3 men, between 20 and 35 years old. The supplementary interviews were conducted in order to explore and clarify issues which emerged after

transcribing and analysing the data. The average length of the interviews was between one hour (shortest) and one hour and a half (longest). All participants and the names of their organisation are anonymised. All the names which are used in the thesis are pseudonyms.

2.4.4 Frontex

Interviewing the authorities (Greek police, port police, and Frontex) was not central to my thesis and due to the fact, that gaining access to them is difficult I only approached Frontex. Frontex has various tasks on Lesvos since it undertakes sea patrols and also screening, registration, identification and debriefing procedures (Chapter 4 and 5). By interviewing Frontex staff I was mainly interested in exploring broader questions and accessing more personal points of view, concerning the so-called refugee crisis and how it has affected them as professionals. As Aas and Gundhus phrase it, I was interested in putting “their experiences in their own frames of reference” (2015, p. 3). Although, gaining access to Frontex was difficult -as one of Frontex’s interviewee emphasised, “We are approached by various people who say that they are students or researchers but in reality they are journalists”- I received a positive response to my request. In order to conduct interviews with Frontex I sent a formal Invitation Letter to the Headquarters of Frontex. I conducted 4 interviews, one interviewee was a woman and the other three were men, between 35 and 45 years old. The average length of the interviews was between forty minutes (shortest) and one hour (longest). All participants’ names were anonymised. All the names which are used in the thesis are pseudonyms.

2.4.5 The Asylum Service

The Asylum service manages the bureaucratic asylum procedures. I was mainly interested in interviewing the coordinator of the Asylum Service as well as administrative staff who were involved in the administration and asylum procedures. I was also interested in interviewing experts on asylum procedures of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), also operating in Moria hotspot. Interviews with staff are important in order to explore the bureaucratic aspect of border crossers’ registration and asylum procedures, the nature of these procedures and the problems, social harm and suffering, which these could bring upon refugees’ lives (Chapter 5). In order to gain access an invitation letter was sent to both the Asylum Service and EASO. Due to the fact that both services did not respond to my invitation I eventually utilized people from my pre-established networks who were practitioners there. I conducted one interview with a 45 years man practitioner working in the asylum service, and a supplementary follow-up interview. Both interviews lasted one

hour. The supplementary follow-up interview was conducted in order to explore and clarify issues which emerged after transcribing and analysing the data.

2.4.6 Miscellaneous

During the research process the issue of the border related deaths emerged. Apart from the macabre aspect surrounding the issue of death itself I also came across the long, impersonal and bureaucratic aspect which surrounds border crossers' deaths management; the *thanatobureaucracy* (Chapter 7). In this respect I decided to interview people who are managing the macabre phenomenon of death in order to highlight the supplementary harm and violence that *thanatobureaucracy* brings upon people, not least through dehumanisation, degradation and de-personalisation. I conducted one interview with the medical examiner, a 50years old man. The length of the interview was one hour. I also conducted interviews from the two Imams responsible for the funerals and the religious rituals. Both interviewees were men between 25 and 35 years old. The length of both interviews was one hour. In order to gain access to them I utilised key contacts from my pre-established network.

Overall, I conducted 60 interviews in an 8-week period extending from:

- (i) 17 October 2016 - 31 October 2016
- (ii) 17 January 2017- 2 February 2017, and
- (iii) 8 May 2017- 1 June 2017.

The average duration of all interviews was one hour. The shortest interview was forty minutes and the longest one hour and a half. The breakdown was as follows:

- 24 in-depth and 2 supplementary follow-up interviews with adult border crossers, two women and twenty men, between 20 and 45 years old
- 10 in-depth and 2 supplementary follow-up interviews with NGO practitioners. The participants were 7 women and 3 men between 26 and 45 years old.
- 11 in-depth and 2 supplementary follow-up interviews with activists. The participants 8 women and 3 men, between 20 and 35 years old.
- 4 interviews with Frontex staff, one interviewee was a woman and the other three were men, between 35 and 45 years old
- 1 in-depth and 1 supplementary follow-up interview with a 45-year-old man practitioner working in the asylum service.

- 1 interview with the medical examiner and 2 interviews with the imams. All interviewees were men between 25 and 50 years old

2.5 Research Tools and Techniques

During my research, I employed several research tools. These were used to gather data from several sources, and to aid the understanding of the range of social harm and violence from border crossers point of view. Each of these tools is considered below.

2.5.1 Non-Participant Observation, Field notes and Document collection

Due to the sensitive issue of violence and harm in relation to border crossers, I deployed a non- participating observation with interaction approach. According to Bryman this means that the researcher,

Observes (sometimes minimally) but does not participate in group's core activities. Interaction with group members occurs, but often tends to be through interviews which, along with documents, tend to be the main source of data (Bryman 2016, p. 437).

I chose a non-participating observation with interaction approach as the best option and throughout the research procedure I engaged as an overt researcher. Ethnographies are usually related and linked to overt or covert participant observation (see Section 2.1.1). Due to the fact that I was living, working and was involved in activist networks supporting border crossers in Lesvos for more than a decade, covering my role as a researcher would be impossible. Most importantly, covert participation would be ethically unjustifiable too. In this way, I followed the ethical principles guidelines of the Open University which states that,

Researchers should be open and honest about the purpose and content of their research and behave in a professional manner at all times (...). Deception or covert collection of data should only take place where it is essential to achieve the research results required, where the research objective has strong scientific merit and where there is an appropriate risk management and harm alleviation strategy” (Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee, 2006).

For the aforementioned reasons by respecting the circumstances, the context in which the participants were living in, participants' mental health and wellbeing, I deployed overt participation by revealing my identity as a researcher to all participants (Bell, 1999; Bryman, 2016; Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee, 2006; Yin, 2011).

Both Kara Tepe camp and Moria hotspot are in reality closed camps since in both cases access is controlled by the Greek authorities. The Greek authorities allow or refuse access by performing the role of the gatekeeper. Thus, how could I conduct a covert participant observation when I was not even able to formally gain access in both sites even for a few minutes? Additionally, many of the border crossers live in precariousness and destitution outside the registration camp or confined into hotspot's closed detention centers. Most of my interviewees were living in Moria hotspot with the ability of moving to the city centre and returning back for the night (Chapter 5). This "generosity" provided by the Greek state is framed by the majority of my participants as the "Mytilene Paper" (*ibid.*). This state of being is a state of precariousness. Furthermore, the legal and social context surrounding unauthorised border crossing in Greece and Lesvos is precarious, fluid and capricious. This fact affects the access to sites and people as well as the mental health and well-being of my participants. All the aforementioned factors made participation in group's core activities as a full member almost impossible.

Within this context my non-participant observation with interaction approach included "hanging out" (with border crossers, volunteers and activists, and NGO staff) and "hanging around" (the Moria hotspot, Kara Tepe Camp, PIKPA camp and Mosaic Support Centre). My aim was to apply the basic principle which (auto) ethnography imposes, meaning to immerse myself into the field. As Bryman argues, "the participant observer/ ethnographer immerses him-or-herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the field worker, and asking questions" (2016, p. 423). From this "hanging out" and "hanging around", observations and interviews - I was keeping full field notes either right away (whenever this was possible) or immediately after I was leaving the sites, spaces and people. Bryman (2016, p. 442- 444) suggests the following field notes' classification; (i) "Mental notes" when it is inappropriate for the researcher to be seen taking notes; (ii) "Jotted notes" where the researcher keeps very brief notes on pieces of paper or notebooks and write more detailed notes later; (iii) "Full field notes" which include detailed notes made immediately after the observation and discussions; (iv) "methodological notes", which include separate observations on methodological decisions and experiences in the field . Although, my main aim was to keep full field notes throughout the research process there were instances when this was impossible. Thus, I decided to keep multiple forms of field notes according to the circumstances. I kept mental notes during coffee breaks without being seen. I also kept jotted notes which involved phrases, quotes, key phrases and important events in a small notebook I was always carrying with me. Also, by the end of every day I was keeping

detailed notes in my research diary. I also kept methodological notes by mainly recording experiences and barriers I confronted in the field. Overall, my field notes included observations, in-depth field discussions and my own thoughts, emotions and reflections. As Daniel McCulloch argues, referring to Clifford Geertz (1973), “this was an attempt to capture ‘thick description’ of research experiences” (McCulloch, 2015, p. 117). Keeping detailed field notes was particularly useful especially during the interviews with gatekeepers and state’s agents. Through my full field notes I managed to capture, analyse and give meaning to awkward and intimidating moments, which my audio recorder would not capture including moves, gestures, gazes, unpredictable incidents during the interview process.

2.5.2 Qualitative Interviews with Participants

In addition to the field notes and observations I conducted interviews which are widely used in qualitative research in order to highlight aspects which cannot be perceived by observation only. Qualitative interviews are a very interesting methodological tool because of the flexibility of the interview process and the capacity of providing information from the participant’s point of view (Warren, 2002; Yin, 2011; Leavy & Brinkmann, 2014; Bryman, 2016). I deployed in-depth interviews by mainly having prepared a guide with topics or themes. According to Melanie Pearson in-depth interviews,

commence with an open, very broad question, which enables the interviewee to talk about their experiences, explain how they feel or what they mean, and provide examples to enhance this explanation. This type of interviewing is particularly useful in studies researching some vulnerable populations, as they can provide a form of therapy (or “give voice”) to the interviewee (2018, p. 6).

The interviews were held in the form of conversation during which interviewees talk about themselves, their work and their points of view concerning the “refugee crisis” and the range of harm which border crossers experience. In many cases I shared my own personal experiences with the interviewees as I realised that this helped in building rapport and trust. As Karen O’ Rally argues, “conversations encourage reflexivity on both parts, enable the time it takes for participants to explore their own beliefs, and to express contradictory opinions, doubts, fears, hopes, and dreams” (O’ Reilly, 2009). All interviews were conducted over one session and lasted between one hour and one hour and a half. In four cases I conducted supplementary follow-up interviews in order to clarify things and fill in gaps which I identified during the transcription process (see Sections 2.4.1-2.4.6). The interviews were carried out during the three research phases; the “scoping phase” and the

two “field trips” in January and May. In all the cases participants were given the option whether or not to have interviews recorded. Many of the participants were happy to be recorded but others preferred not to be recorded and in these cases I kept notes during the interview and also more detailed notes immediately after the interview had finished.

2.6 Qualitative Data Analysis

In terms of the analysis of the data I have collected throughout the research I am deploying the strategy and tools of grounded theory (Bryman, 2016, p. 572; Charmaz, Thornberg, & Keane, 2018). Grounded theory is a method of qualitative inquiry in which as Denzin and Lincoln argue, “data collection and analysis reciprocally inform each other through an emergent iterative process” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 317). Grounded theory is a flexible comparative, inductive and adductive method of shaping the theory from data. According to Charmaz, Thornberg and Keane grounded theory “begins with inductive data, involves simultaneous data collection and analysis, relies on comparative methods, explicitly focuses on analysis and theory construction, checking and strengthening an original analysis” (2018, p. 412). I adopted an iterative approach when collecting and analysing my data. Bryman describes as iterative the “repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis of data” (2016, p. 570). Throughout the research process and in the times between each research phase I transcribed the data I had collected, and I undertook thematic analysis and coding. This process helped me to shape the next steps of the long data-collection research process. After the research finished I completed the process of data transcription and coding process. During this process I transcribed and printed in hardcopy all interviews (both the ones which were digitally recorded and the ones which were handwritten) in order to continue with a final thematic analysis and coding. All data was stored in the safe drive of the Open University with only me having access to them. Transcription was verbatim, but I also considered other non-verbal manifestations, for instance poses and pauses. Interviews were also interpreted through a combination of literal, interpretive and reflexive mode (Mason 2002). Coding followed transcription. As Charmaz argues, “Codes serve as shorthand devices to label, separate, compile, and organize data” (1983, p. 186 in Bryman 2016: 573).

Through the whole process, a researcher diary and memos were kept in order for notes and ideas to be written down and to be evaluated, elaborated and conceptualised. Indexing and analysis followed by using NVivo qualitative software package, which is broadly used in qualitative research as a useful tool in storing, organizing, coding, indexing, writing/editing and analysing data (Yin 2011; Bryman 2016). A narrative analysis approach will be

adopted since “...narrative analysis seeks to put together the “big picture” about experiences or events as the participants understand them” (Shutt 2011: 339), whilst emphasises on the interpretation of data.

2.6.1 Vignettes, Epiphanies and Flashbacks Analysis

At the beginning of each substantive Chapter (3-7 inclusive), I have included smaller sections titled as “vignettes”. Vignettes include my own lived experiences, reflections and observations during the fieldwork in relation to both past and present key events and dramatic situations I have experienced and witnessed, concerning the scale of harm and violence within the context of the “refugee crisis”. Vignettes in this sense are selected “epiphanies” which I deploy within my thesis as a “device” similar to cinematography, in the form of “(memory) flashbacks”. I use them as “a device in the narrative of a motion picture, novel, etc., by which an event or scene taking place before the present time in the narrative is inserted into the chronological structure of the work” (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Vignettes are commonly used within autoethnography in order “to reveal layers of awareness that might otherwise remain experienced but concealed” (Pitard, 2016, p. 1). Epiphanies are selected, reflexive and introspective narratives and stories based on first-hand lived experiences and key events which are/were dramatic. Norman Denzin argues that epiphanies are “dramatic events with beginnings, middles and endings. Epiphanies represent ruptures in the structure of daily life” (cited in Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016, p. 132). As the words “dramatic” and “rupture” imply, epiphanies entangle events wherein life is interrupted, and after which life is not the same anymore. Epiphanies are narratives of traumatic experiences.

“(Memory) flashbacks” play a binary role within epiphanies and within vignettes. The first role is related to the fact that flashbacks link past with present key events. By using memory flashbacks, I am evoking personal lived first-hand experiences and bare witnessing from the past and I am linking them to the present. Memory flashbacks in this sense are helpful “in bringing the past into the autobiographical present” (Holman Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016, p. 126). In this sense, one of the key ideas in this thesis the continuum of violence in space and time (past and present) is narrated via epiphanies and memory flashbacks. The second role is related to memory flashbacks’ own nature: “A flashback is a piece of traumatic memory” (Nugent, 2013). The memory flashback is a phenomenon deriving from psychiatry and is defined as a symptom strongly related to

post-traumatic disorder. According to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, memory flashbacks is the state when,

You find yourself re-living the event, again and again. This can happen both as a “flashback” in the day and as nightmares when you are asleep. These can be so realistic that it feels as though you are living through the experience all over again. You see it in your mind but may also feel the emotions and physical sensations of what happened - fear, sweating, smells, sounds, pain. Ordinary things can trigger off flashbacks. For instance, if you had a car crash in the rain, a rainy day might start a flashback (The Royal College of Psychiatrists, no date).

In this respect, by using memory flashbacks as narrative devices within my research I emphasise and analyse my own post-traumatic stress disorders, unpleasant “awakenings” of traumatic and post-traumatic experiences as an activist and practitioner in the past and as a researcher in the present. Traumatic and post-traumatic experiences possess a special position within my own position(alities) in time and space. Vignettes and thus my selected epiphanies are not pleasant stories. On the contrary, they are painful and agonising ones since they all entail and explore the unendurable state of being overwhelmed from social harm, suffering and violence. In this sense, vignettes-epiphanies-memory flashbacks are lived experiences of traumatic events and post-traumatic disorders which changed the course of life. These states of being have affected all the participants, including me, both directly and indirectly, both in past and present, through and within the passage of time. Both epiphanies and memory flashbacks entail the issue of memory, trauma and post-traumatic disorder and how trauma along with violence and harm is a continuum within space and time. The selected epiphanies derive from multiple sources; mainly from my (auto)ethnographic diary, field notes, introspective and free writing (Ellis, 2004) during my research, as well as my first-hand lived experiences and bare witnessing as local, activist, human rights advocate at Lesvos the last decade.

2.7 Ethical considerations and Principles

There is an extended discussion and consideration within the field of social research concerning the way a researcher can engage in (mis)conduct and transgress ethical boundaries within the fragile relationship between her/himself and the participants. The (in)famous cases of Milgram’s social experiment (1963) (Milgram, 1974) and Humphreys’ ‘tearoom’ study (1970) are illustrative examples of these considerations. The ethical principles underline a basic moral issue within social sciences, research and human

relations in generally; that is, a rejection of “the end justifies the means” standpoint. There are four main ethical principles which I considered and respected throughout the research process, relating to harm or risk to participants, deception and exploitation, invasion of privacy and informed consent.

2.7.1 Harm or Risk to participants

“Harm” or “risk” to participants can reveal itself through multiple ways in the course of the research process. It is not always possible and easy to identify whether and when harm is likely (Bryman 2016, p. 127). Harm sometimes reveals itself via emotions, embodied, stress and anxiety, post-traumatic disorder, trauma, distress, pain and suffering. My research topic is a double-edged sensitive topic, since on the one hand, I explore the lived experiences of border crossers who have bared multiple forms of harm and violence in their countries of origin, on their way to Europe and while they are waiting within camps and transit zones. On the other hand, by investigating, exploring and interviewing already traumatised border crossers then the moral issue of re-harming and re-traumatising by unintentionally making participants revive and re-live harmful experiences is lurking. As Elmir et al., and others suggest, in research concerning sensitive topics empathy, reciprocity and building rapport by the researcher is pivotal in cultivating a suitable environment in order to minimize any risk to the participants (Lee & Renzetti, 1990; Elmir *et al.*, 2011). In order to minimise the harm and risk to my participants throughout the research process I relied on my long-term, previous working experience, as a humanitarian worker for Human Rights Organisations, at a Shelter for women border crossers, survivors of torture, trafficking and domestic violence and at detention centres for border crossers. My main duties there were to detect and provide social support (including psychological support) to survivors of war, persecution, torture and trafficking, rape, pregnant women, children, unaccompanied minors, elder people. During my long-term professional involvement within this field I had received professional training and expertise related to issues of violence, sexual violence, trafficking and torture. Hence, I am qualified, trained and experienced on the one hand, in conducting interviews, recording personal histories, being cautious and alerted during the interviews and, on the other hand, to handle with care, sensitivity and empathy people who have survived violence and live in precariousness.

2.7.2 Informed Consent

The lack of informed consent can cause harm to participants (Bell, 1999; Bryman, 2016; Yin, 2011). I achieved a valid consent with all the participants by distributing information

sheets and consent forms (see Appendices). The information sheet included the aims and purposes of the research and also explained why participant's involvement to the research was pivotal and important for my project. Due to the fact that during my research I conducted interviews with various people, the content of the information sheet and the research process was adjusted to each participant's circumstances. In order to conduct interviews with border crossers I read the information leaflet and consent form to interviewees with the help of interpreters - all people from my pre-established network. This was the only way to ensure that participants who do not speak English or are illiterate will be able to understand and genuinely give consent. On the same grounds and in order to avoid any kind of distress, mistrust, fear and misinterpretation, I requested interviewees' verbal consent (instead of a signature on consent form) to be recorded. I demonstrated a particular consideration of what an information and consent form, and generally a "paper" could signify to each participant. Firstly, because a "paper" can connote and evoke negative and traumatic experiences especially to populations whose future and state of being is dependent on "papers", "documents" and "credentials". The "Mytilene paper" is for instance a common metaphor border crossers use in order to refer to one of the "papers" which makes their life difficult and unbearable, since it connotes their geographical restriction and their lack of autonomy of movement (Chapter 6). Secondly, because some of the participants might have been misinformed or deceived by information leaflets and "papers" distributed by various people (for instance smugglers).

2.7.3 Deception and Exploitation

In order to avoid exploitation and deception of the participants I was open and honest about the nature and purposes of my research. I included my full contact details as a principal researcher of the project and of my supervisor, in case the participants wished to contact for queries or to declare problems concerning the interview process or the researcher. I asked for permission for the interviews to be digitally recorded. Furthermore, participants were informed, and permission was requested concerning the results of the research and their dissemination, for instance that the results will be used in public conferences or in scientific papers. It must be highlighted here that because of the fact that violence (explored in this research) is a highly sensitive issue, which during the interview could have emerged through pain, mental pain, anxiety and distress, the prospective participants were not obliged in any way to participate to the research. This is something that was made very clear to the participants from the beginning. Within the Information

Sheet I included information concerning the participants' right to stop and withdraw from the research, in particular if they feel any kind of distress and emotional pain.

2.7.4 Invasion of Privacy

I demonstrated particular caution and care in order not to invade the privacy of the participants (see Yin, 2011). In order to achieve this, I made sure that the participants were aware and understood why they were identified and approached and what participating in my research involved. Throughout the process I kept an open and honest position of who I was. At the same time, in order to preserve the privacy of my participants I kept the content of the interviewees confidential and maintained the anonymity of the identities of the participants (Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee, 2006). Within the research process, transcription, data analysis and presentation of findings pseudonyms are used instead of real names. Care was also taken in case “findings are being presented to ensure that individuals are not identified or identifiable” (Bryman, 2016, p. 127; Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee, 2006; Potter, 2006). The anonymity of the place of my case study was not possible to be kept, due to the pivotal role that the place currently plays concerning the phenomenon of unauthorised border crossing, harm and violence. Although, extensive care and precaution will be taken in order to avoid harm to participants, it must be admitted that sometimes it is not possible to “identify in all circumstances whether harm is likely” (Bryman 2016, p. 127).

2.7.5 Ethical Considerations

My research topic falls within the category of “sensitive topics” –topics “that have the potential to cause harm to participants, eliciting powerful emotional responses such as anger, sadness, embarrassment, fear and anxiety” (Elmir et al. 2011). Some scholars highlight the issue of how “ ‘sensitivity’ arises within the research process” (Lee & Renzetti, 1990). Scholars denote the psychological and mental consequences of forced migration and political violence, violations of human rights, abuses and torture upon human lives, as well as the post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxiety and depression (Miller, Kulkarni & Kushner, 2006; Silove et al. 2002; Silove, 1999; Cunningham, Silove & Storm 1990).

How should one research the scale of social harm, violence, and suffering based on personal accounts and lived experiences of people surviving, coping and trying to move on with their lives? How can one explore this without enabling, eliciting and “wakening” unpleasant and dreadful experiences of harm? How one can talk about these with a population, whose arrivals and departures from one transit point to another and from one

border to another is traversed with violence and, within this context, violence and harm is routinised and normalised? Furthermore, a great number of border crossers are experiencing violence inside camps and reception centers in host countries. On these grounds, how one can explore the lived experiences of people concerning harm and violence, when these are routinised by influencing their well-being (Schweitzer & Steel, 2008)? How one can research these issues with sensitivity and empathy, but also without putting one's self into emotional risk and being "burnt out"? How one can investigate one's own lived experiences on violence and harm, as autoethnography dictates, without one causing harm and risk to oneself? In other words, how sensitive topics tailor-made for sensitive researchers can be investigated?

Scholars exploring sensitive topics have argued that pain, harm, risk and suffering are identified not only to the participants but also to the researchers. Elmer et al. recognise the difficulty in taking emotional distance. In particular they note that, "Researching in sensitive areas has the potential to pose threat to researcher's well-being particularly if they have strong feelings or have lived experiences of the phenomena under investigation" (see Lee in Elmer et al. 2011, p. 15). The authors refer to "researcher's burnout" and to "vicarious traumatisation" in order to describe the emotional engagement of the researcher with the participants to such an extent that researcher's well-being is effected (Elmir et al., 2011, p. 15). Although, I am very experienced in interviewing refugees who have survived violence (torture, trafficking, physical and emotional abuse) and, thus, I am capable in managing emotions in order to avoid any kind of burnout and vicarious traumatisation, following Elmer et al. suggestion of "debriefing" (p. 15), I had have enough time between interviews and discuss any distress that come up both with my supervisors and people I trust. Discussion has proved cathartic and a helpful cope- strategy in the past. Furthermore, since 2008 I have attended training workshops on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) held by UNHCR in collaboration with the Medical Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims in Greece. In 2016 I attended another workshop on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which was held on Lesbos by the NGO BABEL and Lesbos Solidarity activist network. In 2018 I also attended a four-weeks training workshop on "Understanding and Coping with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)", which was held in Milton Keynes by the NHS. Throughout these training workshops I learnt skills and techniques in identifying the symptoms and managing (post-) traumatic experiences and secondary trauma.

2.8 Problems and Barriers during the Research Process

From 2015 onwards, Lesbos Island is in the epicentre of a severe refugee crisis to such an extent that the term “refugee crisis” has become a synonym to Lesbos. Within this context Lesbos attracted a lot of attention, media publicity positive comments on local people’s solidarity but also negative criticism concerning violence, human rights abuses, and the inhuman and degrading living conditions of border crossers. The suffering of thousands of border crossers became a spectacle (see Chapter 1). Suddenly, EU representatives, journalists, TV channels, film makers, artists, actors and actresses, researchers and even the Pope Francis himself, “parade” in refugee camps at Lesbos (Gillespie, 2018, see also Chapter 1). At the same time, surveillance and military bodies (the Greek Police, Coast Guard and Army, FRONTEX and NATO) as well as (I)NGOS and Greek and EU bureaucrats (Asylum Service staff, EASO) operate and paradoxically peacefully coexist under the same “roof”. From 2015 onwards, Lesbos has been turned into a very securitised and politicised space. Whilst, in terms of social research an over-researched one. As the negative criticisms from some human rights organisations, mainstream media and independent journalists are increasing, politics and processes of silencing increased too. In this respect I can identify one main problem and barrier I confronted with throughout the research process. The one barrier had to do with the fact that I found myself researching an over-researched location and an over-researched population. The second barrier had to do with the fact that this location is both a very securitised and politicised space where accessing to people and sites was controlled by the state. Gatekeepers erected invisible walls mainly through rambling bureaucratic structures and forcible processes of silencing. Thus, the second barrier had also had to do with the situation of when the state through various gatekeepers hides information (see Maillet, Mountz & Williams, 2017, p. 930).

2.8.1 An Over-Researched Location and Population

The magnitude of the phenomenon of border crossing at Lesbos from 2015 onwards attracted much attention. Both amateur and professional journalists and filmmakers, reporters and TV channels from all over the world overflowed Lesbos. NGO practitioners, other professionals, activists and volunteers, local people and of course border crossers themselves found themselves in a difficult and uncomfortable situation. On the one hand, they had to cope with the fatigue of the overload of work, whilst border crossers had to cope with the enduring waiting in unbearable living conditions. Local people had to cope with the shock of witnessing thousands of people being washed ashore in the whole island. For this reason most of the local people I talked to during my research when referring to

2015 told me, “You cannot imagine what was going on here”. The spectatorship of suffering of all border crossers at Lesbos and the exoticism in terms of representation of local people’s solidarity by the mass media mobilised a whole industry. In terms of researchers concern although the academic literature and research until 2014 concerning the refugee issue was very limited this was translated in a variety of papers published having as a case study Lesbos Island.

On the other hand, they all had to deal with the research fatigue and the state of being interviewed, photographed, and filmed over and over again (Clark, 2008) with or without being prior asked and consent. Lesbos as location and the local and refugee population became over-researched. According to Tom Clark, “research fatigue can be said to occur when individuals and groups become tired of engaging with research and it can be identified by a demonstration of reluctance toward continuing engagement with an existing project, or a refusal to engage with any further research” (2008, p. 955).

As Sukarieh and Tannock denote the issue of over-research is likely to arise anywhere. However communities which are more likely to become over-researched are the communities which are marginalised and/or are within a crisis in terms of a natural disaster, war or genocide, and communities which due to their geographical location are accessible to researchers (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2012, p. 496). In this respect, one of the problems I encountered related to over-research was in Sukarieh and Tanock’s words with “the expectations and promises of social change” (2012, p. 496). Many of the border crossers I interviewed were interviewed multiple times by numerous professionals and had expectations that the interviewer will change the situation they were trapped in (Clark 2008). One of my interviewees, Mohammad a border crosser from Syria, noted ironically,

Initially, I volunteered and I add my name to the list for people wishing to be interviewed by journalists. But now I have stopped doing this. One of the journalists publicised my personal information although I had requested not to do so. Also, I have being interviewed so many times but still my situation remains the same.

At the same time, professionals either due to “naivety” and/or “irresponsibility” were giving promises (see Sukarieh and Tannock, 2012, p. 500) which they could not even hold. The failure of all the previous professionals to live up to the expectations and promises to my participants, overwhelmed me with feelings of guilt and shame. It was clear in some circumstances that my participants positioned me too as “one of them”. Apart from guilt and shame I felt I was charged of carrying an inappropriate burden of responsibility due to

the misconducts and unethical activities of other professionals including researchers. Not only “were my participants failing to see any connection between research and positive social change” (*ibid.*) but I was failing to see that connection too. It is possible for communities to feel over-researched in some regards and under-researched in others; a volunteer in a refugee camp during my visit there, started shouting right after I traversed the threshold of the camp, “I wonder why there is no any researcher to come to ask volunteers about the consequences of working in this context in the passage of time.”

In many instances when I was interviewing NGO staff I sensed fear, suspicion, mistrust and in many cases unwillingness to discuss some specific issues. One of the NGO staff told me that if I had not been introduced to her by a mutual friend she would not have spoken to me in the first place. Whilst, throughout the research process some of the NGO practitioners openly admitted that they had received strict orders from their Organisations and they were also obliged with a rule within their contracts of not disclosing what is going on inside Moria hotspot. “I am going to lose my job and there are penal consequences”, one of my interviewees noted. On several occasions, I had to repeat to NGO staff –both to unknown people and to people from my pre-established network- that I was not a journalist or a “spy” but just a student doing her research. One spokesperson of a well- known International Organisation, however, underlined this, “Do you know how many journalists requested an interview from us by pretending to be students?” This doubt, mistrust and fear underlined also another important issue; the fact that I had entered an over-researched place and I was trying to conduct interviews with an over-researched population on Lesbos, where incidents of malpractice and misconduct by journalists had already taken place. All these made me consider how NGOs’ interviewees, practitioners and border crossers themselves by disclosing information, doubting and criticising the researcher from fear or mistrust they were undermining and affecting the outcomes of my research. After reflecting and thinking a lot I realised that this barrier had provided me with useful insights about the processes of silencing. These also made me consider that within the research, participants’ silences are also important as their voices.

Another crucial gatekeeper, as I mentioned above, was the state itself. Two of the three main camps in the island were controlled by the Greek state. The ruling party of SYRIZA had a migration-friendly policy and had several times criticised and condemned previous governments for not allowing access to camps to journalists and the civil society. However, when SYRIZA was elected, it followed the same policies with the previous governments. As a native, local, activist and professional at Lesbos I never nurtured any

kinds of illusions that my identities or the topic of my research which includes state violence, would be kept in secrecy. I did not however expect that members of SYRIZA government playing key roles inside Moria hotspot, people I knew in person and who were actively involved in grassroots movements in Lesvos the previous years, would ignore or disapprove someone they already knew.

I never managed to formally gain access to Moria hotspot and Kara Tepe camp although I personally knew the coordinators at both sites. It was easier to gain access to Frontex staff than to sites and people in Moria and Kara Tepe. Access to Kara Tepe camp and Moria hotspot was eventually achieved by slipping through state's authorisation and attention. Despite the police all over the place and the private security of the G4S I managed to traverse the threshold of Moria hotspot with the assistance of a person of my pre-established network who was working there. Thus, I managed to enter this close setting Moria Hot Spot, spend some hours there, observe and keep full field notes. Concerning Kara Tepe Camp an appointment with the coordinator was booked by phone. I managed to reach Kara Tepe accompanied by a person from my pre-established network who had unlimited access to the camp. We went through the gate and we entered the camp by her car. No one asked me who I was and if I had any authorisation to enter the place. *Filareti* served in a sense as my passport to enter Kara Tepe. As we waited for the coordinator to come I managed to walk around within the site, observe and keep detailed field notes. The coordinator never came to the appointment. I tried to arrange a new appointment with him to enter the site as "I should", meaning formally, but the coordinator never responded to my calls. In this regard, I was not able to formally gain access neither to Moria hotspot nor to Kara Tepe camp. As one of my interviewees emphasised, "If you were working for BBC you would see how easy the coordinators would talk to you" by denoting the fact that gaining access in people and site was also a matter of my social status too.

This awkward and unconventional entering to Moria hot spot and Kara Tepe demonstrated the lack of organisation and control in one of the most important sites currently operating in Europe. With a little bit of serendipity anyone potentially could enter the hotspot. As one researcher I spoke to told me, "I entered Moria without any authorization. I just found the gate open and I entered. No one told me anything. I walked inside by holding my coffee and then quietly I left". This awkward and unconventional entering to Moria hotspot and Kara Tepe was the only way to manoeuvre and omit the control and the invisible walls raised by the powerful. After all, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1978: 95-96).

CHAPTER 3

A History of Continuum of Violence in Time and Space

In the previous chapter I analysed the methodological pathways I traversed in order to conduct the research, collect and analyse my data. I also focused on the problems and barriers in accessing people and sites and how I overcame these challenges throughout the research process. The purpose of this chapter is to challenge the refugee crisis discourses which have been proliferated since 2015 onwards (Chapter 1) and which chronologically place Greece and Lesbos in its epicentre after Alan Kurdi's death in 2015 (Chapter 1; see also Iliadou, 2017). Drawing on the concepts of "continuum of violence" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004, p. 1) in time and space, "everyday violence" (Scheper-Hughes, 1997, p. 471), and "traces and tidemarks" (Green, 2009, p.13) I will show that the refugee crisis of 2015 is not the one and only event in the contemporary history of Greece and Lesbos in relation to border crossing. This Chapter focuses on the multiple processes and border crossings of people before the so-called refugee crisis. Greece and Lesbos have experienced similar crises in the past, long before 2015, a fact that is vividly depicted through the "refugee" and "migration" history of the country and the island itself (see Vignette). Greeks and people of Lesbos have been "refugees" or descendants of "refugees" -all Anatolian Greeks who arrived in Greece and Lesbos in the aftermath of the Asia Minor Catastrophe. Also, due to the fluctuating socio-political and economic conditions Greeks have been migrants themselves to Egypt, USA, Germany and other countries. Since the 1990s, Greece and Lesbos has been an important gate for unauthorised border crossers from Albania, as well as from Asian and African countries. In this chapter I will do the chronicle of the past key events prior to the so-called refugee crisis of 2015 in order to emphasise that violence and harms have been unfolding as a continuum in time and space in a routinised, normalised mode. Moreover, drawing on personal first-hand lived experiences as a descendant of Asia Minor Catastrophe refugees, and as an activist, local, and social worker for border crossers on Lesbos for more than a decade I aim to show that the lived experiences and the multiple, multilayered forms of violence and harms unfold slowly, silently and quietly in space and time as a continuum.

This chapter paves the path for the rest of the chapters, which focus on the “aftermath”; the post-refugee crisis era, events, responses, series of policies and political decisions which were made, proliferated and enforced, as well as their “collateral casualties” (Bauman, 2004) in human cost upon border crossers lives.

Vignette: Border Crossing Monuments

Lesvos Island, May 2017. From where I am standing I can see the Turkish coast. During the night one can also see the lights on the other side of the Greek-Turkish border. The other side. The other side, as well as the people of the other side, is so close but at the same time so far away. The Greek and Turkish borders touch each other at a cognitive vertical line, dividing the sea through the middle, but at a point where the eyes cannot see – some 4.1 miles away. The beach underneath me is full of waste- border crossing waste. The ruins of a grey plastic boat, half buried under the sand, are left there as monuments and reminders of the thousands of border crossings. The ruins of a grey plastic boat are left there as an evidence of a “crime”. This is how “irregular migration” is coldly defined according to the criminal law; as a criminal act. Clothes are lying on the beach. Large sized clothes. Small sized clothes. Adults’ clothes. Children’s’ clothes. A child’s lifejacket is floating in the sea. It capsizes and finally drifts away on the waves. I cannot help but feel that I have just entered a crime scene. How many people, I wonder, have lost their lives on this little piece of earth alone? How many lives have been wasted here? Wasted lives and dreams are silently lying there, underneath my feet. The macabre feeling that I will confront a dead body washed ashore by the sea has overwhelmed me.

The statue of the Asia Minor Mother - the symbol of the massive forced displacement of Anatolian Greeks of 1922 - holding her children is standing still behind me. It has become unnoticeable to people and looks forgotten by both people and time. Her back is turned to the sea and faces the city. Her gaze cries out, “Don’t you remember me?” (Khosravi, 2016) connoting the unequal game between collective memory and oblivion. I look at her and wonder; has she just arrived? Has she just fled and been washed ashore in one of the ruined plastic dinghies underneath my feet? As I stare at the lifejackets floating in the sea and at the Asia Minor Mother statue holding her children, I cannot help but think that I am standing between two different border crossing monuments in time and space; the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 (Neos Kosmos, 2013) and the refugee crisis of 2015. Both

border crossings monuments connote and manifest refugee journeys, massive deaths, forced displacements, unrecognised genocides, suffering and trauma. Both might be described within a “continuum of violence” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004) in time and space. After all, “There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (Benjamin, 1999 [1940] in Khosravi 2010, p. 131).

3.1 Continuum of Violence in Time and Space

The concept of continuum of violence or violence continuum is introduced by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois in order to define violence as a process which is characterised by nonlinearity, repetition, and continuity. According to Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, “Violence is (...) nonlinear, productive, and reproductive...Violence gives birth to itself. So we can rightly speak of chains, spirals, and mirrors of violence -or, as we prefer- a continuum of violence” (2004, p. 1). Violence is a process which unfolds in the ordinary and mundane, everyday social, public and private spaces, in a visible and invisible, legitimate and illegitimate form “in times that can best be described as neither war nor peacetime” (*ibid.*, p. 4). There is neither one type nor a strict violence typology people live through, due to the fact that violence also manifests through rituals, acts, practices and processes of everyday humiliation, degradation and dehumanisation. According to Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, “Violence can never be understood solely in terms of its physicality-force, assault, or the infliction of pain –alone. Violence also includes assaults on the personhood, dignity, sense of worth or value of the victim” (*ibid.*, p. 1). The concept of continuum of violence emphasises the everyday organised, legitimised and routinised acts, practices and processes of humiliation, degradation and dehumanisation, which are misrecognised as violence due to familiarity and normalisation. The practices and processes of “everyday violence” are rendered invisible and tolerated, as Scheper-Hughes emphasises, “not because they are secreted away or hidden from view, but quite the opposite. As Wittgenstein observed, the things that are hardest to perceive are those which are right before our eyes and therefore taken for granted” (Scheper-Hughes, 1997, p. 473). Everyday violence refers to practices and processes which render and reduce some lives as unworthy, inferior and disposable, and gives emphasis “to the ease with which humans are capable of reducing the socially vulnerable into expendable nonpersons and assuming the license –even the duty- to kill, maim, or soul-murder” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004, p. 19)

The concept of continuum of violence operates synergistically with the concept of everyday violence. The two concepts intersect and overlap and they both encompass practices, processes and acts of “social exclusion, dehumanisation, depersonalisation, pseudo-speciation, and reification which normalise the atrocious and the otherwise unthinkable” (Scheper-Hughes, 1997, p. 472). The degrading, humiliating and appalling reception and living conditions, the chaotic asylum and bureaucratic procedures which border crossers experience in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis in Europe are part of a continuum which unfolds in time and space. The concept of “continuum of everyday violence in time and space” is underlying the fact that violence, social harm and their consequences upon the wellbeing of people and their communities can unfold gradually, slowly, silently and quietly within space and (historical, past, present and future) time. The Greek and Lesvos case demonstrates that the continuum of violence and social harm, suffering and trauma is constantly omnipresent and evident in the locale through the remnants and traces of its refugee history of 1922. The historical monuments and statues, the migration museum dedicated to the Asia Minor refugees, the “refugee” neighborhoods of the city centre and the other parts of the island (i.e. Pano Skala, Skala Sykamias), the narratives of survivors of the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 prove the existence of past coerced displacements which have left their marks and traces upon Lesvos through collective memory and trauma. The concept of continuum of violence in time and space as I deploy it here bridges physical and non-physical, conventional and non-conventional forms of violence with time and the concepts of continuity and replication, normalisation, routinisation, suffering and trauma which one finds in the everyday violence and genocide literature (Duschinski, 2010; Green, 1994; Nagengast, 1994; Sabo *et al.*, 2014; Taussig, 1984). In this regard, the concept of continuum of violence in time and space suggests that violence takes place in a repetitive, continuous, mundane and uninterrupted mode within the everyday life to such an extent that becomes normalised and unnoticeable. Furthermore, as part of the “everyday violence” the concept of “continuum of violence” includes the features of consensus, justification, informalisation, immunisation (Nagengast, 1994; Taussig, 1984), legitimisation and illegitimation, dehumanisation, anonymity (Duschinski, 2010), naturalisation, normalisation, and routinisation (Green, 1994; Sabo *et al.*, 2014; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004, p. 1). The multiple, multilayered forms and range of harms are produced and reproduced as a never-ending continuum of complex events and experiences which they progressively deteriorate. The continuum of violence in time and space, hence, is a perpetual, enduring, inter-temporal process which traverses the lives of people trapped within it (in this case border crossers and locals in Lesvos Island).

The concept of continuum of violence apart from having an (inter) temporal nature, it also indicates locality, space.

The refugee crisis of 2015 onwards can be described as part of this continuum of violence and harms in time and space since it is not the one and only hallmark of the phenomenon of unauthorised border crossing in the history of Greece and Lesbos Island. As Sarah Green argues,

(...) today's performance of border exists in the company of past performances of border that linger, not only in people's memories, activities and understandings, but also in theories, places and things. That generates connections and relations as well as disconnections and separations, across space and time. If performing border means classifying and defining people, things and places in a particular form, then that is done not only by the separation and disconnection that renders borders visible, but also by connection that can remake them differently and even erase them from view (2010, p. 264).

If one casts a glance in history, one will discover that the phenomenon of unauthorised border crossings transcends the last 30 years. Greece has received an important number of unauthorised border crossers from Albania, since the 1990s. Indifference, social problems, intolerance, anti-migration politics and lack of migration policies, racialisation processes, dehumanisation, xenophobic violence, violations of human rights and state violence were taking place since then and Albanian unauthorised border crossers were the first being exposed to them. Although Albanian border crossers suffered in Greece and even though they constitute one of the largest migration ethnic groups, they have become in a sense a forgotten, an "invisible group" in Greek society's margins. Wars, conflicts, authoritarian regimes, internal instability, terrorism in Asian and Middle Eastern countries produced unauthorised border crossings, which after 2000 gradually increased in Greece (Bacas, 2010; Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013). Stigmatisation, racism, dehumanisation, intolerance and multiple forms of violence and harms were inflicted upon the new border crossers coming from Asia and African countries, to such an extent that Albanian border crossers were almost "forgotten". This in a sense is a common fate globally border crossers experience. That is, when a new refugee crisis dominates the headlines, previous "crises" are "forgotten", whilst the people affected become "invisible". Border crossers experience common never-ending nightmares and fate with previous border crossers (semi) settled in Greece and Lesbos and they will also gradually become invisible. In the section below, I focus on the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 and the coerced displacement of Anatolian Greek population from Turkey to Greece and Lesbos. This past displacement due to its

significance, as part of the collective memory and trauma, is something that I repeatedly came across during the research. Many of my Greek research participants, even myself, were descendants of Anatolian Greek refugees of 1922 (Gillespie, 2018, p. 155; Papataxiarchis, 2016, p. 5). As I will show below Asia Minor refugees lived through similar, overlapping experiences with the ones border crossers are experiencing now.

3.2 The Asia Minor Catastrophe

In the aftermath of the Greek-Turkish war (1918-1922) an approximately one and a half million people, all Anatolian Greek minorities who were living in Turkey, fled by seeking sanctuary to Greece and other neighboring with Turkey countries (Hernandez, 2016). Due to the national cleansing operations launched by Young Turks (nationalists), all Christian populations (Armenian, Assyrians, Pontian and other Anatolian Greeks) were forced to leave in order to survive from atrocities, massacres, and violence (Pontian Society of Chicago, 2006). The atrocities and massive killings on behalf of the Turkish state, against the Armenian and Pontian Greek populations remain until today genocides which are denied. The Pontian Society of Chicago offers a few estimates,

As a consequence of the deliberate and systematic policy of Turkification of the Ottoman Empire, it is estimated that more than 2.75 million Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks were slaughtered outright or were victims of the “white death” of disease and starvation -a result of the routine process of deportations, slave labor, and death marches (Pontian Society of Chicago, 2006)

The collective trauma and harm of the genocide, violent uprooting and forced displacement that Asia Minor refugees experienced was so deep, that in Greek history, the historic narrative and collective memory of this period is imprinted and referred to as *Catastrophe*.

After 1922 in the aftermath of Lausanne Treaty and the population exchange (Green, 2010, p. 266) approximately 1.2 million refugees were settled in Greece. According to the historical data, the resettlement of refugees in Lesvos and generally in Greece was not easy. Racism, hostility, dehumanisation and discrimination were some of the main features that Asia Minor refugees confronted (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014, p. 1). Although, Asia Minor refugees were Christian Orthodox (dominant religion in Greece), Greek speakers and they contributed to the host society's industrial, trade, cultural development and science they initially faced Greek society's hostility (Pantelia, 2016). At the same time, their “genuinity” as Greeks was challenged. This fact is illustrated in a common dehumanising and degrading name which was attributed to them; “turk-seeds” (τουρκόσποροι)

(Carstensen, 2015). In Lesvos, about 45.000 Asia Minor refugees arrived by boats and settled in various parts of the island, like Skala Sykamnias on the North part of Lesvos, Epano Skala in Mytilene (Papataxiarchis, 2016, p. 5). The 60% of people resident at Lesvos now, are descendants of the Asia Minor refugees of 1922 (Carstensen, 2015; Pantelia, 2016). “Turk-seeds” was a common degrading feature attributed to them also by Lesvos people who doubted Asia Minor refugees’ “Greekness”. During my research, I also documented the belittling local term “προσφυγάρες” (prosfyghares) [from the Greek word “prosfyghas” which means “refugee”], being used in some parts of Lesvos when referring to Asia Minor refugees. Asia Minor refugees were perceived as threats and were accommodated in very poor conditions (Carstensen, 2015). The area of Epano Skala in Mytilene, hosts the statue of the Asia Minor Mother as a remembrance of the refugee past of the locals. The statue represents a mother holding a baby in her hug while a young boy and a young girl are holding her from her legs. This statue is dedicated to all the mothers coming from Asia Minor who crossed the borders and fled to Lesvos in search of sanctuary in the aftermath of the Asia Minor Catastrophe (see Vignette).

3.3 Greeks as Migrants

Migration is a lived experience for Greeks. Not only they are decedents from refugees, but they have also been migrants themselves. After the financial crisis in Greece (2010 onwards) many Greeks are migrating to Western European Union countries in a search for a better future. Historically, there are several arrivals of unauthorised border crossers to Greece, but also several departures of Greek border crossers from Greece to other countries, like Egypt, America and Germany. In the period 1890-1914, almost a sixth of the population of Greece emigrated, mostly to the United States and Egypt. Greece gradually became a receiving country during 1980’s by receiving migrants from Africa, Asia and Poland. According to Charalambos Kasimis and Chryssa Kassimi, between 1950 and 1974 more than one million Greeks migrated to Western Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Between 1974 and 1985, almost half of the emigrants of the post-war period had returned to Greece (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004). As Kasimis and Kassimi argue,

Economic and political reasons often motivated their move, both connected with the consequences of the 1946-1949 civil war and the 1967-1974 period of military junta rule that followed. Official statistics show that in the period 1955-1973 Germany absorbed 603,300 Greek migrants, Australia 170,700, the U.S. 124,000, and Canada 80,200 (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004)

In the next section I document the chronicle of a series of key events and processes which since the 1990's has been unfolding by leading to the severe so-called refugee crisis. As already stated the increased flows, the violence and border crossers' deaths, which have shaped the context of the refugee crisis, are neither something new nor accidents. They are all an outcome of political decisions and policies intentionally enforced and proliferated in a continuum in time and space.

3.4 A Chronicle of the so-called Refugee Crisis

Between 1990 and 2015, gradually unfolds a long period, as far as the unauthorised border crossings concern, which I call as an unknown or disremembered humanitarian crisis. I locate the beginning of this period between 1990 and 2002, when the increased influx of Albanian unauthorised border crossers took place. It then traverses the next two decades and overlaps with unauthorised border crossings of people from Asian and African countries, between 2002 and 2014. This long period is crossed from a plethora of systematic violations of human rights, abuses, discriminations, (institutional) racism, and multiple forms of violence (see sections below). The multiple and everyday forms of violence have systematically being condemned and reported by International and Non-Governmental Organisations and attracted mass media' attention. However, this period has not managed to attract so much publicity to the extent the refugee crisis of 2015 did. Previous humanitarian crises were either ignored, remained unknown or disremembered and cloaked with oblivion, apathy and indifference. This disremembered period is the keystone, which has molded the context, social conditions and foundations of the 2015 refugee crisis. Social harm and suffering, abuses, violations, deaths and violence we are eye-witnessing and experiencing, from 2015 onwards, is a continuum of that previous periods; a continuum of acts and crimes of omissions, commission and negligence of the past two decades. The chronicle of the forgotten humanitarian crisis is in this sense a chronicle of remembrance, memory and counter-memory, witnessing and testimony. The section below analyses the first phase of the ignored and disremembered humanitarian crisis, which unfolds between 1990 and 2004, and documents the overwhelming unauthorised border crossing of Albanian border crossers to Greece and the range of violence and harm they lived through.

3.4.1 Albanian Border crossers

In the early 1990s Greece gradually becomes a major entry point for border crossers, mainly coming from Albania (Dalakoglou, 2016; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2010a, p. 5).

As Médecins Sans Frontières argues, “Greece as the eastern ‘gate’ of the EU, with extensive coastlines and thousands of small and big islands faces a particular challenge in managing migration flows to Europe” (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2010a, p. 5). The increased influx of this human mobility took place in the aftermath of the collapse of the former Communist bloc in 1989 and the collapse of the pyramid banking system in Albania as well as the civil war that followed in 1997 (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004, p. 1; Dalakoglou, 2016, p. 180; Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004; Maroukis, 2005, p. 214; Tsaliki & Chandrinos, 2008). Greece, as Thanos Maroukis highlights, from an immigration country had turned into an emigration country (Maroukis, 2005). However, Baldwin-Edwards notes the inadequate immigration policy of the Greek state, a fact which is mirrored on the lack of approximate data surrounding the extent, types and trends of immigration into Greece. As Baldwin-Edwards argues,

This deficit has been caused by three distinct problems: the great extent of illegal (and therefore immeasurable) immigration; the extreme chaos surrounding the three legalisation programmes, and a lack of reliable data relating to these; the holding of discrete datasets by separate Ministries with little or no communication between them, and in particular, the problem with homogeneis [ethnic Greeks without Greek citizenship] (2004, p. 3).

Albanian border crossers who arrived to Greece were mainly men who were employed in the informal economy by working in the construction sector, farming, manufacturing, while women were employed in domestic work and tourist sector (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004; Maroukis, 2005, p. 214; Tsaliki & Chandrinos, 2008, p. 4). According to Kasimis and Kasimi,

in the 1990 to 2001 period of mass immigration to Greece, immigrants arrived in two waves. The first was that of the early 1990s, in which Albanians dominated. The second arrived after 1995, and involved much greater participation of immigrants from other Balkan states, the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, and India (Kasimis & Kassimi, 2004).

The involvement of the Albanian border crossers into the labour market was so overwhelming that, as Lisa Tsaliki and Konstandinos Chandrinos highlight, the notion of the immigrant worker became a synonym to “Albanian” (Tsaliki & Chandrinos, 2008, p. 3). During the period of 1990s, Albanian border crossers suffered in Greece since they were not accepted by the Greek society (*ibid.*). They experienced multilayered forms of violence in their everyday life, such as social exclusion, racism, xenophobia, exploitation, marginalisation, abuse, and exclusion from citizenship (Tsaliki & Chandrinos, 2008). Ill-treatment by the police and violations of fundamental human rights and freedom are some

very common features of the violence Albanian border crossers experienced. Due to the absence of a migration policy, Albanian unauthorised border crossers were managed by the Greek state through the lens of criminality and public order (Baldwin- Edwards, 2014, p. 1). The criminalisation of the Albanian border crossers was enhanced by their negative media representation, degradation and dehumanisation in a “hysterical”, as Baldwin- Edwards notes, extent resulting in the construction of the stereotype of “the criminal Albanian” (Baldwin- Edwards 2014, p. 1). Albanian migrants were demonised as the absolute evil, whilst they were blamed for criminality. Media stigmatisation and representation perpetuate this image to such an extent that the word “Albanian” became a synonym of inferiority, belittlement and criminality (Tsaliki & Chandrinou, 2008, p. 5). This stigmatisation was so overwhelming that since I was a child the dehumanising and devaluating slogan, “Albanian, Albanian you will never become Greek,” (“Δεν θα γίνεις Έλληνας ποτέ, Αλβανέ, Αλβανέ”) (Golfopoulos, 2007), which football fans and also Greek citizens were commonly saying when referring to Albanian border crossers, is deeply imprinted within my memory.

A mechanism of control and regulation which was implemented against Albanian border crossers during the 1990s was the so-called “sweeping operations³” and “massive evictions” from Greece (Albanian Helsinki Committee, n.d.; Baldwin-Edwards, 2014). However, according to the Albanian Helsinki Committee the most severe and common form of violence that Albanian border crossers experienced was the excessive use of force by the police and the border police, which even included the use of fire arms. As the Albanian Helsinki Committee notes,

The most severe violations of human rights involve use of force against Albanians living and working in Greece, legally or illegally. Cases of psychological violence exerted against them have emerged as another form of violation of human rights, apart from the use of physical violence. Documented cases speak of incidents involving even the use of firearms against Albanians attempting to cross the border illegally. These cases have often proved fatal for the illegal immigrants. Use of firearms by the Greek police in such incidents is a violation of international standards, which limit the use of firearms to life threatening situations and/or serious injury or define them as a means of last resort (n.d, p. 3).

³ See also Chapter 6 on how the repressive and harmful surveillance measure of sweeping operations has been deployed again under the name Operation Xenios Zeus in order to frame stop, search, arrest and deport practices.

The “massive evictions” of border crossers or coerced deportations from Greece to Albania, were politically correct framed as readmissions⁴. Readmissions were arbitrary expanded and enforced even to Albanian border crossers with residency and work permit in Greece (Albanian Helsinki Committee, n.d., p. 3). According to the Albanian Helsinki Committee, “The rights of Albanian immigrants are violated especially at the moment of their arrest and detention, during the investigations as well as criminal proceedings against them” (*ibid.*). The negative representation of the Albanian border crossers from the media had succeeded in formulating a xenophobic and hostile context. A very important aspect of that period is the racist and xenophobic manifestations, fatal hate crimes against them also by Greek citizens (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014). In Lesbos Island, during the 1990s according to local interviewees, Albanian border crossers were mainly employed at local people’s allotments and olive groves; many of them used to sleep in their employers’ stables, they were paid less than the minimum wage and were usually referred by the locals as “the Albanian” and never by their names. The range of violence that Albanians border crossers experienced particularly during the first wave of their immigration to Greece is aptly summarised in the Albanian Helsinki Committee report as follows, “Albanian immigrants living and working in Greece suffer the majority of human rights violation cases among all Albanian immigrants all over the world” (n.d., p. 12).

The increased unauthorised border crossing of Albanian people is followed by the progressive arrivals of border crossers from other countries. From 2000 onwards, Greece becomes one of the largest migratory pathways and a gateway of border crossers from Asia and African countries to Europe (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 36; Bacas, 2010a, p. 154). Between 2004 and 2010, Lesbos Island increasingly becomes the main gate for border crossers seeking sanctuary to Europe. Simultaneously, a great number of border crossers were crossing the land Greek-Turkish border via Evros River (Triandafyllidou, 2014, p. 3). The following section focuses on the second phase of the ignored and disremembered humanitarian crisis, which is between 2000 and 2014, and encompasses a detailed account on the social and political context which shaped the conditions leading to the so-called refugee crisis of 2015.

⁴ See Chapter 5 on how the concept of “readmissions” has been deployed again in order to frame the coerced removals of border crossers to Turkey in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement (March 2016) and the state of emergency which the refugee crisis generated.

3.4.2 Unauthorised Border Crossings in Greece and Lesvos (2002-2014): Political and Social Context

Between 2002 and 2014 the arrivals of border crossers in Lesvos were less in numbers (Bacas, 2010a) in comparison to 2015 when the refugee crisis started unfolding. However, similarly to the period of the refugee crisis of 2015, a main characteristic of this period was the lack of reception services for border crossers arriving to Greece. Reports from international and Non-Governmental Organisations illustrate the unsuitable reception and the degrading, inhuman and appalling living conditions border crossers were facing by entering the Greek territory as well as the insufficient laws surrounding the asylum and reception procedures (Amnesty International, 2013a; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2013; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2010c; UNHCR, 2009). As a result, the sites that were used in order to host border crossers were initially monasteries and churches, police stations, former prisons and military bases or former warehouses and public buildings (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, p. 285; Iliadou, 2012, p. 325). In the early 2000, PIKPA camp (a children's summer camp) on Lesvos was initially used in order to host border crossers mainly coming from Iraq (Carstensen, 2015; Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, p. 285; Green, 2010). Whilst, during 2004 a former military base, outside of the city centre, was used in order to host mainly Iraqis and Afghan border crossers (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013, p. 95). During 2004, Lesvos Island receives an increasing number of border crossers. During 2004 the NGO Greek Council for Refugees documented an increased number of Afghan unaccompanied minors living in Lesvos' detention centre under degrading and humiliating living conditions (2004, p. 6). In 2005 under the vague administrative coordination of the Municipality of Lesvos and the Police, border crossers were "hosted" in Pagani detention centre, which was a former warehouse building located in an industrialised zone 4km away from Mytilene city centre (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013, p. 95; Iliadou, 2012, p. 325). The detention centre operated between 2005 and 2010, whilst it was condemned as the worst detention centre in Europe during 2009 (*ibid.*). "Reception" centres within the Greek mainland and Lesvos before the refugee crisis era have systematically been condemned for the appalling, inhuman and degrading living conditions and for human rights' abuses (Amnesty International, 2010, 2012a, Carr, 2012, 2015, p. 92; Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, p. 285; Iliadou, 2012, pp. 323, 325). In the end of 2009, Pagani was condemned as "worse than Dante's inferno" (sic) (Carr, 2015, p. 94; Sarantidis, 2018b) by the former Deputy Minister Spyros Vougiaris who after visiting Pagani detention centre also declared, "What I have seen today is a human tragedy, with conditions in which no human being should be kept"

(in UNHCR, 2009). The living conditions there were so appalling that on the 5th April 2011, the 1st section of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in judgment of the case *Rahimi v. Greece* (8687/08) that, “the conditions of detention in the centre, particularly with regard to the accommodation, hygiene and infrastructure, had been so severe as to undermine the very meaning of human dignity” (2011, p. 3). The seven Judges added that these conditions “irrespective of the length of the detention of the applicant, amounted to degrading treatment in breach of article 3” (*ibid.*, p. 2). Pagani was closed in 2010 after protests of activists of the No Border Movement, and also allegations for physical abuse on behalf of the police against detained border crossers (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013, p. 95; Iliadou, 2012, p. 325; Welcome to Europe, 2009).

Although between 2004 and 2010, the unauthorised border crossings were relatively low, in comparison to 2015, the main features of that period included the following features. The deliberate and systematic practice of prolonged detention in structurally violent, humiliating, appalling and degrading living conditions within closed detention centres; lack of facilities, lavatories, bathrooms, beds, mattresses; detention in overcrowded facilities; lack of sanitary conditions; contagious health and skin diseases related to detention and the living conditions; enduring queuing and waiting for hours in order to use the bathroom and the toilet; lack of warm water during winter; lack of free access to the yard; isolation due to lack of access to telephone booths, communication with the outside world, and the right to have visitors; restricted access to legal aid and information about international protection; lack of interpretation; humiliating and degrading treatment from the Greek authorities, systematic physical and psychological abuses on behalf of the police; the systematic prolonged detention of unaccompanied minors; the systematic violations of human rights, the inadequate access to healthcare and medical treatment; lack of shelters for unaccompanied minors, survivors of rape, torture, trafficking, LGBTQ people, older people, pregnant women, people with disabilities and families; separation of families (for a detailed account of the aforementioned see Amnesty International, 2010; Carr, 2015, p. 92; Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, 2013; Iliadou, 2012, pp. 330–332; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2010c, p. 5, 2010a; Pro Asyl, 2009). That period was characterised by International and Non-Governmental Organisations as “a continuing humanitarian crisis” (Committees on Foreign Relations of the US, 2012, p. 1532).

During 2010, the migratory pathway which leads to Europe changed and the flows diminished from Lesbos, and dramatically increased at North Greece (Carr, 2015, p. 96; McDonough & Tsourdi, 2012, p. 1). According to Paul McDonough and Evangelia

Tsourdi, “Overall, by the end of 2010, about 90% of people detected irregularly entering the EU arrived first in Greece” (2012, p. 3; see also European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2011, p. 4). Through this lens, Frontex’s Deputy Executive Director described Greece in 2010 as the “hottest area of illegal immigration in Europe” (Carr, 2015, p. 88). This period was also framed as a “humanitarian crisis” (Pro Asyl, 2014). During this period, many deaths of border crossers attempting to cross Evros were recorded. In this respect, Evros River, the natural border between Turkey and Northern Greece, became an enormous graveyard for hundreds of border crossers (Pro Asyl 2014, p. 88). Fylakio Detention Centre in Evros region which was used to “host” border crossers was then condemned, similar to Pagani in Lesvos, for the humiliating and degrading conditions, for abuses, and violations of human rights (Greek Helsinki Monitor, SOKADRE, Minority Rights Group-Greece & OMCT Network SOS-Torture, 2011, p. 10; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2010c, 2010b). According to the NGOs Greek Helsinki Monitor, SOKADRE, Minority Rights Group-Greece, and OMCT Network SOS-Torture,

Especially in Evros, both at the organised Fylakio detention centre and the detention facilities of border police stations, there are overcrowding, dire hygiene conditions, lack of access to yards, lack of communication with the outside world, absence of interpretation services, lack of information about rights and obligations while mixed detention (minors and women being held in the same cell with adult men) is a frequent phenomenon (2011, p. 10).

In the aftermath of the emerging humanitarian crisis in Evros region the Greek Government builds a fence in order to prevent the unauthorised entries from Turkey to Greece. This was one of the first fences which were raised by an EU member state in order to prevent and deter unauthorised border crossings (see Chapter 4). This action fired demonstrations from activists, political movements, citizens and International and Non-Governmental Organisations (Pro Asyl, 2011). Moreover, its efficiency as a deterrent measure was challenged. Indeed, the only thing that was accomplished was to make the route more militarised, securitised, expensive, dangerous and fatal for border crossers (Pro Asyl 2014).

During 2012, unauthorised border crossings changed again. Greece’s and EU’s fence, the “wall of shame” in NGO Pro Asyl words (Pro Asyl, 2011), as a deterrence policy at Evros River had much to do with this relocation of the flows from Evros to the Greek Islands again. The relocation of unauthorised border crossings from Evros to Lesvos from 2012 onwards overlaps with two more parallel processes which are escalating and deteriorating

until today. That is, the process of an escalating racialised violence from the Neo-Nazi Golden Dawn (Human Rights Watch, 2012; Papanicolaou & Papageorgiou, 2016a) and the dehumanisation, criminalisation, xenophobia and extreme institutional violence from the Greek policy makers and the police (Amnesty International, 2012b; Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 36; Karamanidou, 2015, p. 21; Pro Asyl, 2012, p. 10). This xenophobic context was more intense in the mainland, and particularly Athens and Patras since most of border crossers were moving from the islands there, by staying in abandoned buildings and/or by sleeping rough in public parks and squares, in order to work and finance the smuggling and trafficking networks for another pathway to Europe (Pro Asyl, 2012, p. 5).

Simultaneously, the Neo-Nazi political group Golden Dawn, although initially a marginalised subgroup existing since the 1990's (Karamanidou, 2015, p. 22; Xenakis, 2012, p. 445), by taking advantage of the ongoing financial crisis and the anti-migration sentiments became very popular and managed to be elected in the Greek Parliament (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 7; Papanicolaou & Papageorgiou, 2016a, p. 400; Xenakis, 2012, p. 446). On the first and second elections of May and June of 2012 Golden Dawn gained 6,97%, and 21 seats, on the elections of January 2015 gained 6,28%, 388.387 votes and 17 seats and on the elections of September 2015 gained 6,99%, 379.722 votes, 18 seats (Ministry of Interior, 2012, 2015). Golden Dawn committed several hate, racial motivated crimes and murderous attacks against border crossers (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 7), who were trapped in Greece for years due to the hostile EU (and national) migration laws, policies and treaties (such as Dublin I, II, III) all enforced by the Greek governments. In the year of 2012, so-called self-appointed "citizens' groups"⁵ in Athens city centre by claiming that their neighbourhoods were occupied and ghettoized by homeless border crossers formed safeguarding watch units by organising patrols in order to "clean", as they claimed, their neighbourhoods and protect their properties and families from criminality and contagious diseases (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 7).

At the same time racist discourses publicly articulated by the Greek policy makers and at the same time racist policies were enforced. A common humiliating and dehumanising attribution which was used both by government's representatives and the media when referring to border crossers, was the term "lathrometanastis" (clandestine or illegal migrant in Greek), a humiliating, degrading term which dehumanises and objectifies border crossers (Karamanidou, 2015, p. 19; Konstantinidou & Michailidou, 2014, pp. 93, 129). Apart from racist language the Greek state also adopted (far-right) nationalist, militarist,

⁵ Concerning the re-emergence of self-appointed so-called *citizens' groups* which in reality are affiliated to Golden Dawn and are responsible for many hate crimes particularly in Lesvos see Chapter 6.

medical discourses and metaphors concerning unauthorised border crossing, such as “invasion”, “hygienic bomb”, “re-occupation” (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 36; Pro Asyl, 2012, p. 10). At the same time, violent and repressive control enforcements were implemented like the notorious Operation Xenios Zeus which was enforced in early August 2012 and is in force up to now (see Chapter 7). According to Human Rights Watch its aims were threefold,

“1) deterring illegal immigrants by sealing the border with Turkey; 2) identifying undocumented migrants, particularly in urban centers, and returning them to their home countries; and 3) remaking Athens a city of law and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors” (2013, p. 13).

Operation Xenios Zeus was a stop, search, arrest and deport practice combined with the use of physical abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2013, p. 4) and was criticised as a “racial pogrom” (Karamanidou, 2015, p. 25). The name Xenios Zeus was adapted by the ancient Greek God Zeus who, ironically, was the symbol of hospitality and the protector of all guests and foreigners. Operation Xenios Zeus was informally called “sweep operation” capitalising the will of the Greek government to restore the public order and manage the unauthorised border crossers through “sweeping” and “cleaning”, meaning through violence and coerced deportations. The deliberate choice of naming this violent and hostile practice against border crossers as Xenios Zeus on behalf of the Greek State was nothing else than a manifestation of policy makers’ perverted minds and cruelty.

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the beginning of the war in Syria in 2011 both former colleagues and I working on Lesbos before the so-called refugee crisis, became witnesses and documented many testimonies from border crossers who had started arriving, saying that there are thousands more waiting at the Turkish coasts in order to come to Greece. During that period, I also remember that the police officers were also commenting the numbers of border crossers waiting at the other side of the border so as to come to Greece. In the end of 2012 border crossers, mainly from Afghanistan and Syria, started entering in Greece through Lesbos. During that period, I remember that the Greek authorities (the police and the port police) were refusing to arrest border crossers arriving and do all the necessary identification, registration and bureaucratic procedures which would allow them to travel to the mainland. Gradually, Mytilene’s public spaces, parks and streets were full of border crossers sleeping rough and who were paradoxically desperately requesting to be arrested by the police. Greek authorities’ deliberate denial and inaction to arrest border crossers and provide them with reception, accommodation and documentation

resulted in their violent abandonment to destitution, homelessness and the racialised violence of the local Golden Dawn. On February 2013, I witnessed one of the first serious violent attacks from Golden Dawn members who were throwing stones against a group of border crossers sleeping rough in the port of Mytilene. As a result, a pregnant woman was severely injured.

Although the main crisis-discourse locates the beginning of the refugee crisis in 2015 (Chapter 1), the period between 2012 and 2014 was a hallmark and a processor of the severe refugee crisis which is going to become visible and a spectacle later on 2015 onwards in Europe having Greece and particularly Lesvos Island as its epicenter. The crisis was already visible for Greek and Lesvos people from 2013 onwards. Since 2013 border crossers never stopped arriving to the island. Another aspect of this crisis, before the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, concerns the chaotic, inconsistent, confusing and maze-like bureaucracy surrounding the registration, identification and asylum procedures. This is another bitter story of the continuum of everyday violence in time and space which is materialised through (mis)management, violent abandonment and inaction until today (see below and Chapter 5).

3.4.3 Reception, Registration, Asylum and Bureaucratic Procedures

The registration, identification and asylum procedures in Greece and Lesvos show significant shifts since the 1990's until the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement on March 2016 (European Council & Council of Europe, 2016) which inaugurated a new era as far as human rights concern (see Chapter 4). In 2008 when I started working in Pagani the bureaucratic and administrative, identification (screening), registration and asylum, procedures were in the hands of the police. A main feature of this period is the deliberate inconsistency, chaotic, lengthy, mentally exhausted and maze-like bureaucratic asylum procedures, uncertainty and enduring waiting of border crossers within closed detention centres in absence of any other open reception facility (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, 2013; Iliadou, 2012). During that period, the police was responsible for many and contradictory tasks a state which Stratos Georgoulas and Dimos Sarantidis call as “a conflict of interest position” (2013, p. 97). On the one hand, police were responsible in managing and completing the bureaucratic asylum procedures, which practically meant: To inform all border crossers about their right to seek for international protection; to receive the asylum application forms from the applicants; to issue and renew border crossers' documentations; conduct the interview process for international protection; and finally make the decisions upon international protection. On the other hand, police were

responsible for the identification and registration procedures, which included the collection of biometric data (i.e. fingerprinting), which were saved in EURODAC database. At the same time, the police were responsible to arrest, detain and deport. How could the police manage, examine, judge, apply the international law by providing protection to border crossers without their assessment being objective or biased, when its substantial role as surveillance body was repression, policing, controlling and preventing unauthorised border crossings? The fact that the police themselves were responsible for managing the whole asylum procedures, was demonising the phenomenon of the unauthorised border crossing as a crime. Furthermore, how could police officers, who had no expertise and knowledge of how to conduct an interview with border crossers seeking international protection including survivors of torture, rape and trafficking, decide on an individual's legal status and thus life? As Georgoulas and Sarantidis argue,

for an objective assessment regarding the applications for international protection there must be a substantial knowledge of refugee law and continuing information on socio-political developments in countries of origin of applicants. The fulfilment of these conditions is demanding for these decision-making and consultant bodies, which are, however, charged both with numerous other police and administrative functions, and have not the appropriate scientific training in order to judge fairly on asylum applications (2013, p. 97).

During that period the percentages related to the recognition of border crossers' legal status in Greece was less than 2% (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 36). Border crossers, while waiting for the police to complete the asylum and bureaucratic procedures, were coerced to live confined in overcrowded, degrading and humiliating conditions. After enduring waiting in vain many of them were deterred and either withdraw their claims or never applied for international protection in the first place. Deterrence was taking place in such extent that, as Georgoulas and Sarantidis note, after a point the detainees themselves in Pagani "were deriding anyone who decided to make an asylum application" (2013, p. 102). The aforementioned examples are outcomes of an early "bureaucratic deterrence" which was enforced as a deliberate policy and which I discuss in more depth in Chapter 5. Between 2013 and 2016, without the main problems actually being resolved and overcome, the asylum procedures partially passed to the hands of a new established Asylum service (Law 3907/2011) (Asylum Information Database, 2015, p. 21) whilst, the reception procedures to the hands of the First Reception and Identification Service (K.E.P.Y) (Law 3907/2011, Presidential Decree No. 102/2012). Although, the Asylum Service was established in 2011 it was only during June 2013 when it officially started operating with

main duties to “receive, examine and decide on all applications for international protection lodged in Greece” (Campaign for the Access to Asylum Network, 2015b). Until 2015, there were only six Regional Asylum Service Offices within Greece located in Athens, Lesbos, Rhodes, Thessaloniki, Northern and Southern Evros and three Asylum Units located in the city of Athens, Patras and Xanthi (Asylum Information Database, 2015, p. 22). The continuing involvement of the police in the asylum procedures seemed to have come to an end. This proved to be a dream since an “old” asylum procedure continued taking place parallel to a “new” (Chapter 5). The unlovable involvement of the police within the asylum procedures did not after all end. The continuity of the “old” asylum procedure under the jurisdiction of the police perpetuated the bureaucratic, legal and thus existential limbo of backlog cases. Border crossers, in many instances, found themselves in despair when realising, that after living for more than a decade in Greece, their files were lost by the police and thus they had to begin the procedure all over again (see Chapter 6). The parallel systems caused a lot of confusion, uncertainty, suffering and discomfort to border crossers since even the Asylum Service created more problems than solved. Since its formal operation, in 2013 until the end of 2015, the Asylum Service could not guarantee the free access of border crossers to international protection (Asylum Information Database, 2015, p. 24). Border crossers were obliged to go in person to one of the Regional Asylum service offices and seek for international protection.

This proved to be very challenging for border crossers who could not travel to one of the Regional Asylum Service offices, due to the fact that they did not possess any travel document, passport or visa. Thus, border crossers did not have free access to the asylum procedures and were banned from international protection. Because of that they were confronting the danger of being arrested, detained and deported. The lack of interpreters and other working staff, even at the headquarters of the Asylum Service in Athens (Asylum Information Database, 2015, p. 23), made the asylum procedures slow if not impossible. At the same time, the implementation of Skype service in order for border crossers to lodge their intention of seeking international protection and book an appointment with the Asylum service, made people’s lives (especially those who were living in camps in isolated areas) very difficult, since in most of the cases brought no result (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016d). Queuing and enduring waiting outside the main Regional Asylum office in Athens caused discomfort, complaints and demonstrations (Campaign for the Access to Asylum Network, 2015a). Even people with serious medical conditions were forced to present themselves repeatedly before they finally had their asylum claim registered although the registration of such cases is prioritised (Asylum Information

Database, 2015, p. 25; Campaign for the Access to Asylum Network, 2014). As Asylum Information Database notes, “Persons in need of international protection who do not manage to lodge their application are not protected from arrest, detention and deportation” (2015, p. 25). This has been an unpleasant moment for people desperately wishing to seek for international protection but due to lack of access to the Asylum Service, they were remaining without documents in precariousness excluded from international protection, rights and welfare benefits. As a result, many people were arrested by the police (Campaign for the Access to Asylum Network, 2015b) and detained for prolonged periods of time.

From March 2016 onwards, when the EU- Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016 was applied the asylum procedures are managed by various national and European bodies; the Greek Asylum Service and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), whilst the registration and identification procedures are managed both by Frontex’s staff and the Greek authorities (the Police and Port Police) (see Chapter 4 and 5). The reception procedures are managed by the First Reception and Identification Service (K.E.P.Y) with the involvement of various International and Non-Governmental Organisations. Although, the “old” asylum system gradually fades there is a parallel “old” and “new” asylum system, which traverses the whole system until today, and is framed as backlog. Until 2016 there were approximately 30,000 backlog cases in Greece whose application for international protection is still pending for more than a decade (CNN, 2016).

3.4.4 The Continuum of the Politics of Detention

The politics of administrative detention of people seeking international protection in humiliating, degrading, harmful and life threatening conditions in Greece, Lesbos and elsewhere is neither something new nor an exception to the rule which was re-enforced under a state of crisis, exception or emergency (see Chapter 4). The deliberate and systematic administrative detention of people seeking international protection (including unaccompanied minors, survivors of torture, violence, trafficking, gender and sexual harms) in unsuitable sites and in appalling, harmful and life-threatening living conditions has been the norm within the management of unauthorised border crossing for the last twenty years in Greece (see previous sections). The politics of systematic administrative detention dates from at least the 1990s, ever since the massive unauthorised border crossings of Albanian people to Greece (Cheliotis, 2017; Dalakoglou, 2016). The politics of detention is characterised from an enduring, in Adriani Fili’s words, “detention continuum” (Fili, 2016) enforced until now at the expense of border crossers’ lives. The

politics of administrative detention is part of the wider politics of deterrence and “culture of control” (Bosworth & Guild, 2008), which includes detention and imprisonment, severe migration controls, restricted entry criteria, demonisation and “crimmigration” procedures and negative media representations of border crossers as illegal and criminals (Aas & Bosworth, 2013; Bosworth & Guild, 2008; Bosworth & Turnbull, 2014). Moreover, a culture of control includes administrative, managerial, and organisational operations, budget management, and prolonged detention, increasing discourse linking migration to crime, organised crime and terrorism. Finally, it includes a bureaucracy of migration system which neutralises individual’s problems by grouping all migrants to one category (Bosworth & Guild 2008, p.712, see also Fassin 2011). Through this lens, unwanted human mobility is defined and managed through the banner of illegality and crime (Aas & Gundhus, 2015; Aliverti, 2012; Fassin, 2011; Weber & Pickering, 2011). Combined with an illegality/criminality vocabulary too, all border crossers are represented and treated as criminals and not as people seeking international protection. Bosworth and Guild note the domination of a “culture of control” instead of a “welfare culture” (Bosworth & Guild, 2008).

According to the Greek Council for Refugees (2016c), administrative detention is a bureaucratic procedure and not a criminal sentence which is imposed for multiple purposes such as identification, national security, public order, expulsion and removal. As Dennis Broeder argues, “[administrative] detention is not a matter of criminal law and prison sentences, but rather a matter of administrative detention, a temporary, bureaucratic measure to enable the enactment of other policies, such as expulsion” (2010, p. 169). It is the administration that imposes the detention and not the criminal law. The length of administrative detention in Greece has changed several times. When I was working in Lesbos in 2008, administrative detention could last for up to three months. In 2009 this changed into a maximum period of six months and then changed again to 18 months. Border crossers, unaccompanied minors and the so-called “vulnerable groups” were the ones to suffer most from the duration of administrative detention and thus from time per se. As if seeking international protection was a red flag for the police (until 2011 responsible for the management of the asylum procedures), border crossers seeking international protection were punished for seeking asylum by being coerced to stay the whole 3 months within Pagani and sometimes even more in appalling, degrading and harmful living conditions (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, 2013; Iliadou, 2012). And that was the rule. Due to inaction of the prosecutor relating to their “guardianship”, unaccompanied children could also spend three months within Pagani. Detention’s duration- time- did not make any

discrimination regarding people with severe mental and health issues. It was since then obvious that the politics of administrative detention (and the asylum per se) was/is an enforcement of the politics of suffering.

By making detention facilities, as Andriani Fili (2016) notes, unlivable and the living conditions harmful, appalling, humiliating and degrading, policy makers were indirectly coercing border crossers who were already “in” to “get the hell out”. That is to say, to leave the way they came; within dinghies, hidden in lorries, on foot and seek for other *safe havens* as far away as possible from Fortress Europe, or even better to return where they came from in the first place. This harmful and violent, systematic and deliberate practice which is implemented within a continuum in time and space is vividly manifested through a public statement of Greece’s Head Police Officer Nikos Papagiannopoulos in 2013, “Make their lives unlivable” [Κάντε τους το βίο αβίωτο] (DOC TV, 2013; Fili, 2016; News 247, 2013). In Head Police Officer’s own words, “We must make their lives unlivable, meaning that one should realise that from the moment that one enters within this country one will be detained. Otherwise we do nothing. We [Greece] consist of an attractive destination place for migrants” (NEWS 247, 2013).

By saying “make their lives unlivable”, the Head Police Officer was encouraging the police officers to demonstrate “zero tolerance” and therefore to exercise violence against border crossers in order to coerce them to leave from Greece (Amnesty International, 2013b; Fili, 2016). Until 2013, all the asylum, bureaucratic, registration, screening and even reception procedures were at the hands of the police (see Greek Council for Refugees, 2016d). Furthermore, from 2012 - due to the ongoing financial crisis - there was an increasing concern about the affiliation of many police officers with the Neo-Nazi political party, Golden Dawn (Karamanidou, 2004; 2015; Papanicolaou & Papageorgiou, 2016a; Vasilaki, 2016), notorious for the hate crimes against migrants in the Greek mainland and the islands (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Karamanidou, 2004, 2015; Racist Violence Recording Network, 2014). Make their lives unlivable dogma in practice was enforced at the expense of all border crossers and migrants with more violence, abuse, and violations of human rights (Human Rights Watch 2012, 2013; Amnesty International 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2010, 2015a; European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2015; Pro Asyl 2014). According to the Racist Violence Recording Network’s report, during 2014, 21 cases were recorded of refugees who were subjected to racially motivated violence exercised by police officers in Greece (2014, p. 13). At the same time, the European Commission against Racism and

Intolerance in 2015 recorded 109 cases of violence with a racist motivation exercised by the police (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 2015). These recorded statistics however do not reflect the reality and the range of violence to which border crossers were and still are exposed to by the police on the mainland and in the border zones particularly Lesbos, the detention and reception centres, the streets and everyday life. Taken together, all of these are illustrative of the Greek Government's politics of deterring border crossers by turning Greece "into an 'unfriendly destination' for those considering entering or staying in the country clandestinely" (Cheliotis, 2013a, 2013b).

A hallmark of the politics of detention is the existence, multiplication and operation of numerous first reception and pre-removal centres and refugee camps within Greece and the Greek Islands (Chapter 5). The multiplication of detentions and the politics of administrative detention of border crossers is not only a Greek phenomenon but it also takes place in EU and beyond (Ceccorulli & Labanca, 2014; MIGREUROP, 2016a). The activist network MIGREUROP emphasises the increasing tension of the politics of detention within EU and neighboring countries. "From 2011 to 2016, the total known capacity of camps identified by the Network, has gone from 32,000 to 47,000 places" (MIGREUROP, 2016b). Within this map - and in any map being produced by organizations and networks - police stations are not included. Confinement of border crossers within police departments is a common and systematic practice in Greece. Due to the lack of facilities or due to lack of space and capacity within the existing ones, police stations' cells are turned into informal "reception" centres within which border crossers' rights are systematically being violated. According to MIGREUROP,

Such forms of administrative confinement may be combined with alarming police practices (handcuffing, body searches, and confinement with ordinary prisoners) which criminalize and put these foreigners in a precarious situation; internment in such places is generally not subject to judicial control and often has no legal basis; interned people cannot always have access to migrant associations, or to doctors or lawyers (2016b, p. 1).

As Filli highlights, "Historically, no Greek government has ever shown the political will to break with the detention continuum" (Filli 2016). At the same time, Michael Welch and Liza Schuster argue that, "(...) detention is among the gravest acts the state can take against people. The seriousness of detention is even greater under circumstances in which persons are held not on criminal or immigration charges but rather after fleeing persecution" (2005, p. 332).

Conclusion

The timeline of key events I discussed in this chapter includes a plethora of violations of human rights, structural violence, intimidation and the infliction of an enduring social harm to border crossers. The problems surrounding the overall procedures in each different phase of border crossings, the reception, asylum and bureaucratic procedures were never actually resolved. On the contrary, the chaos, inconsistency and inefficiency surrounding the asylum and bureaucratic procedures, the reception and living conditions, were inherited from one phase to the other by formulating a genealogy, routine, ritual and a *continuum* of enduring misery, violence and harm in time and space. In this Chapter I argued that the phenomenon of the unauthorised border crossing in Greece is not new and traverses the history of modern Greece since the 1990s and even before. Greece and Lesvos have been important gates for unauthorised border crossers and faced multiple humanitarian crises prior to 2015. In this regard, this chapter is an account of the rituals and continuum of coerced border crossings, violence and harms of the bureaucratic and asylum procedures in space (Greece, Lesvos and Europe) and time (from the 1990s onwards). This chapter provides a detailed account of the border harms and violence border crossers were experiencing in Lesvos and Greece before the so-called refugee crisis of 2015.

In the next chapter I will explore the EU border regime, the externalisation and internalisation policies which are enforced since the 1985 Schengen Agreement and have proliferated in the aftermath of the refugee crisis. I will show that the refugee crisis has been deliberately and systematically abused by the EU policy makers in order to enforce and legitimise brutal, obscene and violent politics as “extraordinary” and “exceptional” (Agamben, 2005) in order to deter and pre-emptively prevent border crossers from reaching Northern Europe.

CHAPTER 4

Externalisation, Internalisation and Deterrence

In the previous Chapter I showed that the unauthorised border crossings in Greece are not new phenomena, rather old. The multiple unauthorised border crossings are traversing the history of modern Greece since the 1990s. In particular, Lesvos Island has been an important gate to Europe for unauthorised border crossers since the early 2000s. As I demonstrated in Chapter 3 although, both Greece and Lesvos were receiving an increasing number of border crossers due to wars, conflicts and the authoritarian regimes the reception, management, the identification, registration, bureaucratic and asylum procedures were characterised by inconsistency, uncertainty, enduring waiting and chaos, by producing violence and multiple forms of harms. In this chapter I argue that the refugee crisis discourse has been deliberately and systematically abused by the EU policy makers in order to impose and legitimise brutal, obscene and violent politics as extraordinary and “exceptional” (Agamben, 2005) in order to deter and prevent border crossers from reaching Europe. The politics which have been imposed are the politics of closed borders, deterrence, externalisation and internalisation. All the aforementioned politics are not something new and have been deployed within a space-time continuum. In Greece and Lesvos, those politics are mainly materialised through the EU-Turkey Statement, the Hotspot Approach and the Geographical Restriction Regime, combined with an enormous process of military and humanitarian intervention within the borders. The aforementioned multiple and multilayered policies are implemented in stages following border crossers as they traverse the various lands, seas and borders in order to reach Europe.

In Section 4.1 I will show that in the first stage, the EU policy makers (via the externalisation of EU borders) aim to pre-emptively deter and prevent border crossers from reaching Europe in the first place by immobilising them within non-EU countries. Through this lens, in Section 4.2 I will show that in a second stage, the EU policy makers are targeting border crossers, who are already *en route* to Europe, and through militarised surveillance and controls are abandoned to be adrift in the borders of violence. Border crossers on transit routes in Europe face the violent and fatal (land and sea) borders, ruthless “gangs” and smuggling and trafficking networks, arbitrary push-backs. In Section

4.3 I will show that in the third stage the EU policy makers aim to deter border crossers, who finally manage to reach Greece, from moving further to Europe via internalisation policies which transformed Greece and particularly the Greek islands into “buffer zones”. The example of the EU-Turkey Statement, the Hotspot Approach and the Geographical Restriction Regime are indicative examples of internalisation. Furthermore, I will show that internalisation has turned Lesbos into a Prison island by immobilising border crossers there for uncertain time in multiple forms of limbo.

Vignette: The Borders of Violence

It was a very warm day of June 2008 in Pagani detention centre. The combination of the warm environmental conditions and the overwhelming heat deriving from Pagani’s cement yard made the situation suffocating. The place was also busy during that time. “Newcomers” (border crossers) had arrived the previous night and since there was not any employee on shift to give them dry clothes, blankets, and mattresses, they were coerced to stay in wet clothes by sleeping on the floor until the next day. The noise was intense. Through a small window of the warehouse which was located on the second floor, one of the two employees, who was assigned with the burden of distributing to border crossers their mattresses, was throwing the mattresses to another employee on the ground floor. Among the employees on the ground floor there were also two border crossers forced to help the employee to do his job. The employee did not do anything; he was just supervising the two “volunteers” by giving them orders on how to do his job. A few steps away another employee was distributing by literally throwing from a distance toothpastes and soaps to border crossers. He was wearing a surgical mask and gloves and he was yelling at them, “Take this. Come on take it, you asshole”. Within this overwhelming combination of shouting and verbal violence I heard a man’s voice requesting me to approach. “Hey, Miss come here”. The man was a border crosser from Somalia who was detained in Pagani. He had just arrived the previous night. The man passed his hands through the blue bars of his cell which were standing as a border between us. The right hand first and then his left was stretched towards me by reaching me. Then, he started showing me his marks and bruises; on his hands, his neck and also the ones who were expanding from his neck towards his back. “They tried to kill us”, he whispered in order not to be heard by anyone and especially the police, whose office was just a few steps away from his cell. His name was *Omar*. *Omar* crossed the border the previous night with 19 more people. As he repeatedly said their plastic boat was small, too small to carry all of them. When they crossed the Greek-Turkish sea borders and traversed the Greek territory

they were detected by a Greek Coast Guard's vessel. As Omar said, "We thought that they were going to rescue us". As he continued narrating me his experience during the search and "rescue" operation by the Coast Guard, he added,

They [coast guard] pulled us all out of the boat but instead of rescuing us they beat us, they tied our hands, they made a hole on our boat and throw us again in the sea. They abandoned us there with a flooding plastic boat. They left us there to die. We were eventually being rescued by a Greek rescue team.

As he was speaking the other men who were travelling with him in the same boat approached and confirmed what *Omar's* was saying. *Omar* then added, "There was also a woman travelling with us. They beat her too". The incident was formally reported, and allegation was made against the coastguard for abusing and abandoning them during the search and rescue operations. From fear of their personal safety as they were locked within the cell in Pagani and also from fear of retaliation on behalf of the Greek authorities in Pagani and or later, *Omar* and the rest border crossers were hesitating to report it (see also Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013, p. 97). Georgoulas and Sarantidis have documented a similar case of police violence against border crossers in Pagani detention centre. As they argue, "the witnesses had informally claimed that they had been threatened by the police in order not to mention any of the real incidents that took place" (2013, p. 98). Five days after the allegation was made, *Omar* and the other 19 border crossers mysteriously vanished from Pagani detention centre. This disappearance was even more awkward considering the fact that the vast majority of border crossers were usually facing prolonged detention (Chapter 3), before they were eventually released. As a result of the mysterious disappearance of the "victims", I was left without the "victims-witnesses" to testify during the administrative inquiry under oath (ΕΔΕΕ) which was conducted one month later at the Coast guard offices in Mytilene.

During the administrative inquiry under oath (ΕΔΕΕ), I had to testify all alone within a small and uncomfortable room in the Coast Guard's building. The organisation I was working for did not provide me with any legal aid or advice. Neither my coordinator nor anyone else came at least for support. I still remember this inquiry as frightening and intimidating. The inspector at some points was yelling instead of speaking making the whole process look like as interrogation. The inquiry-interrogation lasted for five hours during which the inspector was constantly asking me, "Why are you doing this? These coastguards are family men who are serving their country", by implying that patriotism and

the protection of national security was above all and that it was also an ultimate value. Therefore, who was I to challenge these ultimate values? What interests was I serving? Who I was to harm the reputation of the Coast Guard? The outcome of the inquiry, conducted by both a high and lower rank Coast Guard officer showed that there was not such a thing as an abuse or abandonment. The “family men” were found innocent, and how would they not? The impunity of state officials is overwhelming, and it is also the norm since in cases of formal allegations the audit and the auditor is the same. As Georgoulas and Sarantidis highlight, “the administrative examination by the police of cases concerning police misconduct is highly problematic, since it has to do with the legal paradox that auditor and audited are from the same organisation” (2013, p. 90).

I will never forget the inspector who was forcing me to identify the survivors by demonstrating me their pictures from the day of their arrest. “Did you think that we would not be able to trace them?”, the inspector was sarcastically asking me. I was forced to identify their faces and even the clothes they were wearing. It was a terrifying experience which even ten years after still generates feelings of horror, pain and guilt. The mysterious disappearance of border crossers made the feeling of guilt worse through the passage of time. What have I done? Have I put their lives in even more risk due to the allegation? Are they still alive? Have they been arbitrary deported back? I never learned what happened to them and I cannot stop but think that I am responsible for whatever happened to them.

This case of violence and abandonment within the liminal border zones and thresholds is not the first and not an isolated incident. It is one of the multiple incidents that occurred and still take place while border crossers traverse the various land and sea border (see Section 4.2).

4.1 “Good Fences Make Good Neighbours”: Deterrence and the Externalisation of the Borders

In 2003 a policy paper under the name “A New Vision for Refugees” emerged, which included Tony Blair’s vision concerning the management of the unauthorised border crossings within Europe (Travis, 2003). This was Blair’s proposal in the EU-Thessaloniki Summit about the establishment of a regime of Regional Protection Areas, Protection Zones or *Safe Havens*, as well as Transit Processing Centres (TPCs) for border crossers on transit routes on Europe (Amnesty International, 2003; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Noll, 2015; Travis, 2003). Blair’s ambivalent scheme would involve denial of entry to unauthorised border crossers and “economic migrants” by returning them within the Safe

Havens; within countries outside the EU and close to border crossers' homelands (Johnston, 2003; Noll, 2015; Travis, 2003). Safe Havens countries would serve as containment for border crossers arriving for the first time there, for deportees from other EU countries and for returnees for possible resettlement to EU (Antonakaki, Kasperek, & Maniatis, 2016; Hess & Kasperek, 2017, p. 63; Kuster & Tsianos, 2016). According to Jennifer Hyndman the notion of "safe spaces" is not something new. It is a post-Cold War phenomenon which has been enforced in 1991 to Northern Iraq, Haiti and Rwanda (Hyndman, 2003; Long, 2013). Safe havens reflect the deliberate political intention of a "preventive protection" (Hyndman, 2003, p. 168), meaning the provision of humanitarian relief as far away as possible, within or closer to displaced populations' home countries (Long, 2013). This demonstrates the determination of policy makers "to bring safety to people rather than people to safety, by force if necessary" (Newland 1999 in Hyndman, 2003, p. 169). The EU management of the so-called refugee crisis -as it is particularly demonstrated via the Greek case- echoes Blair's vision of safe havens.

4.1.1 Externalisation

Through this lens, the increased deaths at the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea, the suffering and violence at the Greek-Macedonian borders, particularly since 2015 onwards, triggered an awkward and oxymoronic response on behalf of the EU policy makers. By using the language of "crisis" and "emergency" (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016) humanitarianism and care (Ticktin, 2016), EU policy makers announced their intention to "protect" border crossers' lives from the criminal trafficking networks, culpable for the border-related deaths, and prevent more deaths within the land and sea border crossroads (Valletta Summit on Migration, 2015a, 2015b). From this angle, on November 2015 EU policy makers stated during the Valletta Summit on Migration,

We are deeply concerned by the sharp increase in flows of refugees and border crossers, which entails suffering, abuse and exploitation, particularly for children and women, and unacceptable loss of life in the desert or at sea. Such an increase places the most affected countries under severe pressure, with serious humanitarian consequences and security challenges (2015b, p. 1).

Although one would expect that their "deep concern" would be demonstrated via "safe passages", as scholars and activists have advocated (Arsenijević et al., 2017; Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016, p. 316; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2015; Newsweek, 2016; Ponthieu, 2017; UNHCR, 2013), which would allow border crossers to safely reach to

European soils, an overwhelming “preventive protection process” (Hyndman, 2003, p. 168) was enabled instead at and within the borders (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2016; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). Médecins Sans Frontières note that “safe passages” should encompass,

Legal crossing of sea and land borders should be authorised into and inside the EU and transportation facilitated. Humanitarian assistance and access to functioning asylum procedures should be provided at entry points and along migratory routes. Dignified reception conditions have to be offered for all (2015, p. 1).

The preventive protection response involved the proliferation and fortification of borders, the erection of fences, intense securitisation, militarisation of the borders (De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016, p. 10; Fassin, 2011), as well as an overwhelming humanitarian intervention as the Greek and Lesvos case demonstrates (Howden & Fotiadis, 2017). The range of the humanitarian intervention particularly in Greece and Lesvos was so intense that, according to Howden and Fotiadis, “it became the most expensive humanitarian response in history, according to several aid experts, when measured by the cost per beneficiary” (Howden & Fotiadis, 2017).

This symbiosis between surveillance and humanitarian care, prevention and protection is framed by Miriam Ticktin as “armed love” (2016, p. 257). The armed love process also encompassed processes of externalisation and internalisation, which were pushing the borders of Europe both outwards (externalisation) and inwards (internalisation) (Andersson, 2014b, p. 5; De Genova & Tazzioli, 2016; Frelick, Kysel, & Podkul, 2016; Hess & Kasparek, 2017; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 24). The Greek and Lesvos case is an indicative example of the simultaneous outwards and inwards shifting of borders (Section 4.3). As I argue below this ambivalent armed love, the outwards (externalisation) and inwards (internalisation) shifting of borders and border controls beyond the physical borders of EU, are not something new (Akkerman, 2018; Hess & Kasparek, 2017). Neither are the violence, harms and deaths of border crossers who are trapped in this suffocating armed love. One thing to note is that the outwards shifting and expansion of border controls beyond EU territory is unfolding since the 1985 Schengen Agreement (Collyer, 2007; Jones, 2016, pp. 16–22), which since then was focusing “on fortifying borders, developing ever more sophisticated surveillance and tracking of people, and increasing deportations while providing ever fewer legal options for residency despite ever greater need” (Akkerman, 2018, p. 2). The externalisation of

the borders policies have dramatically increased since the 1990's but they saw an overwhelming flourish in 2015 onwards, in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis (Akkerman, 2018; Collyer, 2007; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Noll, 2015; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016).

Externalisation is pivotal within the European Migration Agenda of 2015 (European Commission, 2015a) established via the EU-Turkey Statement of 2016 which recognises Turkey as “safe third country” or “a first country of asylum” (see Section 4.3). Externalisation involves the proliferation and fortification of borders, expansion and implementation of migration controls, policing and surveillance beyond EU, bilateral agreements with non-EU countries to manage the asylum procedures and deportees beyond the EU territorial borders (Akkerman, 2018; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016). As the UN Special Rapporteur François Crépeau notes, externalisation “effectively involves shifting the responsibility of preventing irregular migration into Europe to countries of departure or transit, especially through capacity-building activities in third countries towards stopping irregular migration” (Crépeau, 2013; see also Frelick et al., 2016, p. 193). From this angle, EU policy makers in order to “protect” but mainly to control and pre-emptively stop border crossers before they even reach the EU territory (Akkerman, 2018; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014b), imposed immobility via “immobilisation strategies” (Aas, 2007; Weber & Bowling, 2008) and “remote control tools” (Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016, p. 4) by stranding border crossers inside transit and buffer zones. Externalisation via deterrence is re-enforced as “a solution (...) that migrants are better protected by being deterred from undertaking the journey in the first place” (Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a, p. 149). This oxymoron is core to the politics of deterrence. Externalisation policies are shifting the borders of EU outwards and even further (Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016, p. 11; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 25) -far from Europe's shores and media, there the collateral casualties in human cost are almost completely invisible to EU citizens (Akkerman, 2018, p. 2).

4.1.2 Deter, Prevent, Protect “No Matter What”

The toolkit of externalisation, deterrence and control includes, firstly, the Safe Countries of Origin, and the Safe Third Countries or First Country of Asylum. The concept of safe countries involves the recognition of non-European countries as safe by the EU policy makers (European Commission, 2015b; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016, p. 7). The safe country concept has a direct effect on the asylum procedures which can take place within

the *safe countries*. Through this lens, Turkey and Afghanistan were recognised as *safe* (European Council & Council of Europe, 2016; European Union, 2016), whilst, an EU-Turkey Statement-like deal has been agreed between the EU countries and Libya (European Commission, 2017a). Secondly, it includes bilateral and readmission agreements with non-EU countries. Countries which were traditionally considered as *transit* -with an exchange of development, capacity building in terms of technical support for building infrastructures and financial aid- are now turned into “buffer zones”, by keeping border crossers stranded there. In this regard, buffer states are turned into the watchdogs of fortress Europe (Akkerman, 2018; Fekete, 2001), with no safeguards, “any promises of protection for the human rights of migrants” (Crépeau, 2013; see also Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a). After all, their ends justify the means, and by paraphrasing Frost’s quote; “good deals and bilateral agreements make good neighbours” (Frost, 1914; Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a, p. 152). Additionally, externalisation includes the deployment of maritime patrol operations within the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea (i.e. Frontex, NATO, EU Naval Force Med) (BBC NEWS, 2016; Frontex, 2015; Garelli & Tazzioli, 2016; NATO, 2016), as well as the establishment of a European Border and Coast Guard (EBCGA) which “would consist of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, an enhanced Frontex, and the national border authorities, which are to share responsibility for European integrated border management” (Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016, p. 25).

Externalisation has in practice generated an enormous rise in death tolls, since the EU militarised borders made the border crossings more perilous, risky and expensive (Akkerman, 2018, pp. 2, 4; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2015, p. 1). Externalisation policies, also, coerced border crossers to address to the smuggling and trafficking networks, which have boosted their business at the expense of border crossers’ lives. Meanwhile, fences and walls, have been gradually erected within Europe by making the act of seeking sanctuary and international protection almost impossible (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 20). After the fall of Berlin’s Wall which was a symbol of the Cold-War era, Greece is one of the first EU countries which erected a Wall in order to deter and prevent unwanted human mobility (Baczynska & Ledwith, 2016; Reuters, 2016). As Bill Frelick, Ian Kysel and Jeniffer Podcul argue,

One of the cruel ironies in recent years is that a number of countries that have developed rights-sensitive standards and procedures for assessing protection claims of border crossers within their jurisdictions have simultaneously established barriers that prevent border

crossers from setting foot on their territories or otherwise triggering protection obligations (2016, p. 191)

The aforementioned features are not the only obscene aspects of externalisation policies. In order to halt, deter and prevent border crossers from reaching Europe, EU policy makers are making deals and businesses with authoritarian countries, which systematically violate human rights, by providing them funding and even selling them weapons (Akkerman, 2017, 2018). As Mark Akkerman argues,

The European Union in all its policies has a fine rhetoric on the importance of human rights, democracy and rule of law, but there seems to be no limits to the EU's willingness to embrace dictatorial regimes as long as they commit to preventing 'irregular migration' reaching Europe's shores. As a result there have been EU agreements and funding provided to regimes as infamous as Chad, Niger, Belarus, Libya and Sudan. (2018, p. 3)

Thus, EU is culpable for the birth of more conflicts and violence as well as the production of more refugees, since "the same industry selling arms to the Middle-East and North-Africa, fuelling the conflicts, repression and human rights abuses that have led refugees to flee their homes is also the key winner of EU border security contracts" (Stop Wapenhandel & Transnational Institute, 2016, p. 1). Multinational, military corporations (i.e. Airbus, Finmeccanica, Thales, Safran) have benefited from the increased militarisation and securitisation of EU borders, but have also actively been involved in lobbies by formulating policies and practices (Akkerman, 2018; Andersson, 2014a, p. 15; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 22). Military and security corporations which manufacture and/or provide arms and equipment to border guards, private security corporations, intelligence and surveillance multinationals corporations have made profits from EU militarisation and securitisation policies (Andersson, 2014a, p. 14; Loewenstein, 2016; O'Donnell, 2016; Stop Wapenhandel & Transnational Institute, 2016, p. 12). Frontex's role on the surveillance of EU borders has been extensively enhanced and so has its budget (Stop Wapenhandel & Transnational Institute, 2016, p. 11). According to Akkerman,

The budget finally adopted for 2016 is even an astonishing 67% higher than that for 2015. According to the proposal for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, this will be the minimum budget for the new agency in the coming years. For 2017 an extra 31.5 million euros have been requested, including 10 million Euros to purchase small and medium size operational equipment (2017, p. 14).

The politics of the closed borders, externalisation and deterrence in place, instead of protecting border crossers' lives by tackling the criminal trafficking networks as policy

makers were claiming, made things worse by making the migratory pathways through land and sea, more violent, risky, perilous and fatal (Brian & Laczko, 2016; Data Analysis Centre, 2017; International Organisation for Migration, 2016; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2015). Externalisation pushed border crossers to the violent land and sea borders where they are confronted with more violence, push-backs, shipwrecks and death. This fact is vividly mirrored in Médecins Sans Frontières' statement to the EU policy makers, "Your Fences Kill" in 2015. As Médecins Sans Frontières observe,

These policies have turned a foreseeable and manageable influx of refugees into a humanitarian crisis on Europe's beaches, borders, train stations and motorways. The current approach of "non-reception" and closed borders has caused death, injury and chaos. The only way Europe can stop this misery is to replace the smugglers with a safe, legal and free alternative (2015, p. 1).

In the following sections (4.2 and 4.3) I discuss how the politics of externalisation and the militarisation of the EU borders brought the exact opposite results from the ones which were initially promised ("to end the human suffering, restore the public order and tackle the criminal trafficking networks"). Externalisation, militarisation and internalisation strengthened rather than tackled the criminal and trafficking networks (Akkerman, 2018, p. 34), made borders even more violent and inflicted more suffering, violence, border-related harms and deaths.

4.2 *En Route*: Violent Thresholds and Harmful Borders

"Behind every death there was a dream, and then a tragedy."

(NewStatesman, 2008)

According to the United Nations Office of the Higher Commissioner, "Policies aimed not at governing migration but rather at curtailing it at any cost, serve only to exacerbate risks posed to migrants, to create zones of lawlessness and impunity at borders, and, ultimately, to be ineffective" (OHCHR, 2014, p. 2). As Roxanne Lynne Dotty argues, "geographical border areas are the prototypical 'margins of the state', i.e. spaces where law and order are simultaneously rigorously enforced and elided and where tensions are often the most obvious and the most extreme" (2011, p. 599). The politics of deterrence, externalisation and closed borders created liminal geographical spaces –"zones of exception" and "thresholds"- of extreme, violence and exploitation (Agamben, 1998; see also Vogt, 2013). The proliferation, securitisation and militarisation of borders beyond EU territory, made

border crossings even more “spatial” and “fragmented” (Collyer, 2007, p. 668; Vogt, 2013, p. 764) complex, non-linear and lengthy throughout which border crossers move, stuck, wait, and again move. As Wendy Vogt argues, “migrants occupy a liminal space as they attempt to cross national borders, earn cash, secure shelter, eat, and make incremental movements toward their destination” (2013, p. 766).

Borders are liminal spaces which are characterised by lawlessness and impunity, legally and geographically (De León, 2015, p. 27; Khosravi, 2011, p. 62; Prem Kumar & Grundy-Warr, 2004, p. 38). According to Jason De León, “Border zones become *spaces of exception*-physical and political locations where an individual’s rights and protections under law can be stripped away upon entrance” (2015, p. 27). While crossing the one violent border after the other, border crossers simultaneously are traversing liminal thresholds and spaces wherein the law is suspended, the sovereign power deems to operate, and lives are reduced “bare lives” or “homo sacer” (Agamben, 1998). “Bare life” is a philosophical metaphor originating from the ancient Roman Law. According to Agamben, a bare life represents “the life of the “homo sacer” (sacred man), who may be killed and yet not sacrificed” (1998, p. 12). It represents a liminal figure who is depoliticised by being stripped from any social and legal rights and whose life is deemed by the sovereign as unworthy to enjoy rights and the protection of the law; thus her/his death is of little consequence (Agamben, 1998; see also De León, 2015, pp. 27–28; Doty, 2011; Chapter 5). As Nicolay B. Johansen notes,

Homo sacer exists both inside and outside society, and thereby mirrors how sovereignty relates to the limits of law and territory. By the ‘inclusive exclusion’ of homo sacer, the state creates an ‘exception’. This exception is both a threshold between the inside and outside and a defining entity for the law and the state (2013, pp. 258–259).

Bare lives are considered exceptions to the norm, and are consigned, excluded and abandoned to “zones of exception”, wherein the law is suspended by creating liminal thresholds (Agamben, 1998, p. 12) or “creates a juridical void which permits abuses and killings without punishment” (Doty, 2011, p. 602). Unwanted border crossers can easily be reduced to “bare lives” and thus potentially be abandoned, effaced and killed (Agamben, 1998). Due to the management of the unwanted human mobility through the banner of security, threat, terrorism, illegality and crime (Aliverti, 2012; Bosworth & Guild, 2008) unauthorised border crossers have been demonised, dehumanised and racialised. The “zoopolitical” management of borders, the representation and treatment of

border crossers as animals (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 80, 2015a) and their confinement in degrading and humiliating living conditions (see Chapter 4) lead to further dehumanisation by reducing border crossers deeper to “bare life”. In this sense, when a life is no longer a life and humans are “no longer humans” (Prem Kumar & Grundy-Warr, 2004, p. 36), their expulsion and even death is legitimised and normalised.

Legitimation and normalisation of death and violence at the borders are vividly manifested via the systematic practice of push-backs and “left-to-die boats” (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 64) (see Chapter 5). The borders as thresholds, as “zones of exception” (Agamben, 1998, p. 12), where law is suspended, are operating as a moral alibi for the denial of any state responsibility for border-related deaths, violence and harms (Doty, 2011) (see Chapter 5).

4.2.1 Push-backs

Arbitrary push-backs are not isolated incidents but a common, deliberate and systematic practice of the politics of closed borders and deterrence which are applied on various border zones from Melilla and Ceuta, the U.S-Mexico borders and Greek-Turkish borders. Push-backs are exercised by the authorities at the sea and land Greek-Turkish borders, the Greek-Macedonian (FYROM) borders and elsewhere (Amnesty International, 2015b, p. 11; UNHCR, 2016). Greek borders and especially the river of Evros (Aggelidis, 2016; Greek Council For Refugees, 2018; Lee, 2018) and the Aegean Sea are the violent sites where these practices take place silently and quietly since the 1990’s, perpetuating in this sense the continuum of state violence, the violence of the politics of deterrence and closed borders in time and space. Various cases of illegal push-backs of border crossers at the sea as well as at the land Greek-Turkish borders have been documented by International and Non-Governmental Organisations as well as activist networks (Amnesty International, 2013a; Asylum Information Database, 2015; Greek Council for Refugees, 2014; Pro Asyl, 2012, 2014). Violent borders are the sites where atrocious acts of violence, gun shootings, physical abuse, torture, intimidation are taking place silently and quietly (Amnesty International, 2013a, 2015b; Asylum Information Database, 2015; Pro Asyl, 2014, 2016) - before the dawn and within the deep night, in remote/isolated territorial border areas, and where there are no witnesses to testify. Activist organisations, like Pro Asyl, have reported the systematic practices of illegal push-backs, human rights violations and state violence, the systematic impunity of the state agents committing all these crimes at and within the borders (Pro Asyl, 2012, 2014). According to the NGO Pro Asyl,

(...) illegal push-backs from the Greek sea and the land borders occur systematically. Greece has been accused of such blatant human rights violations before. However, the brutality and the extent of violations found in this report are shocking. Masked Special Forces officers are accused of ill-treating refugees upon apprehension, detaining them arbitrarily without any registration on Greek soil and then deporting them back to Turkey, in breach of international law. In fact, there are “grey” zones where refugees are detained outside any formal procedure; in practice these refugees don’t exist. Special units of the Greek coastguard abandon refugees in Turkish territorial waters without consideration for their safety (Pro Asyl, 2012).

Apart from the push-backs within the sea, testimonies from border crossers note the existence of a border mafia consisted by thieves or paramilitary armed men, making the border crossing even more agonising and perilous. According to *Arzoo*, an Afghan border crosser woman,

The boat was not very big, and we were approximately 60 to 70 people including children 8, 10, 12 and 14 years old. When we were in the sea some Turkish people came inside the boat. They were thieves and they were asking for our money. We were almost drowned. When they approached the boat, they opened the engine in order to remove it from the boat. We were crying and begging them not to remove the boat’s engine and we gathered our money and gave it to them. After they took our money, these men finally did not remove the engine and left. This is a tragic experience and we were all very afraid. The three men were masked, they were speaking Turkish and they had their heads covered with scarves.

In 2015 Human Rights Watch brings to the surface evidences of paramilitary people who were attacking border crossers’ boats within the sea (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Human Rights Watch recorded eight incidents where armed and masked men, who were identified as Greeks, attacked the boats and “deliberately disabled their boats by damaging or removing the engines or their fuel, or puncturing the hulls of inflatable boats. In some cases, the boats were towed to Turkish waters” (*ibid.*).

4.2.2 Agency, Resistance, Survival

“Thresholds” and border “zones of exception” might be liminal spaces which can reduce border crossers to “bare lives”, but they are also spaces of possibilities where anything can happen (Doty, 2011). From this angle, not all border crossers are necessarily reduced to “bare life”, since many of them resist and survive (see also Chapter 5/ Section 5.5.4 where I discuss agency, resistance, and survival within the border). Survival per se is a form of resistance (Doty, 2011, p. 610). Border zones as liminal spaces reflect the tension between

the increased fortification of borders, the externalisation, surveillance and control and border crossers who defy, disobey, and metaphorically speaking “mock” borders by crossing them. According to Reece Jones, “By refusing to abide by a wall, map, property line, border, identity document, or legal regime, mobile people upset the state’s schemes of exclusion, control and violence. They do this simply by moving.” (2016, p. 180). In the following section I will discuss how thresholds and border “zones of exception” allow the existence and flourishing of illicit activities of various agents; the criminal smuggling and trafficking networks, gangs, robbers and thieves, intermediates, paramilitary men and border guards. They also allow the impunity of the perpetrators often under the sanction of the state. I will also discuss how liminality allows a profitable and demanding neoliberal capitalist market to flourish, wherein border crossers’ bodies, labour and lives become useful objects and commodities for transaction, exchange and exploitation which may both gain and lose value within local conditions (Vogt, 2013, p. 765). Thus, I will discuss the issue of commodification of border crossers and the degradation of the value of human life per se, by echoing Veena Das’ argument that, “the ultimate fetish is the idea of life itself as an object of endless manipulation” (in Scheper-Hughes, 2003, p. 4).

4.2.3 The Border Mafia of Land and Sea

Various agents “work” at the border: the police, the state officials, border guards, military and paramilitary people, gangs, smuggling and trafficking networks, travel agents, hotel owners (Akkerman, 2018; EUROPOL, 2016; Shelley, 2014). As Shahram Khosravi argues by reflecting on his lived experiences, “We ‘illegal’ travellers were an easy source of income for many people we came across *en route*” (2007, p. 50). Sometimes these actors work independently but very often collaboratively by making the border crossings even more expensive, agonising and dangerous, a profitable trade at border crossers’ expense (Amnesty International, 2017c, p. 6). According to *Keita*, a border crosser from Syria on Lesbos,

We lived in a smuggler’s house and we were robbed twice there by people who pretended to be the police. They threatened us that if we would not give them our money they would deport us. From fear that we were going to be deported we gave them all our money. One guy from fear that he is going to be deported jumped from the window and broke his waist and legs. I was about to do the same thing, but they did not let me do it. They grabbed me. And these people were not the police they were the mafia who were collaborating with the smuggler.

As Amnesty International notes “refugees and migrants have become a resource to be exploited – a commodity around which an entire industry has grown” (2017c, p. 6). Smugglers and traffickers are key actors within this border market because without them facilitating the journey, the journey cannot be fulfilled. Smugglers and traffickers are actors whose existence ends up being a “necessary evil” for border crossers in lack of safe passages. Smugglers and traffickers know the tricks, they have the “know-how”, they know the pathways through the mountains, and the “safe houses” along the way (Shelley, 2014). They also know the “right” people, meaning all the other actors consisting of what I name as the “border mafia”; particularly police officers, customs officials and border guards, who are keen to turn a blind eye and allow border crossers to continue their journey but in exchange of labour, money or sex often in the form of rape (Falcón, 2001; Khosravi, 2011, p. 40). I am using the term border mafia both metaphorically and as part of a border vocabulary which I found that exists and is used among border crossers. Mafia is a term often used among border crossers, like *Keita*, in order to describe the various agents who, engage with illicit activities, organised crime and exploitation. Many of the stories border crossers have shared with me were lurid stories of border lawlessness, violence and exploitation *en route* to Europe by various agents, including the police, border guards and other state officials. Paradoxically, it is also the term mafia that border crossers use in order to refer to border guards and state officials who brutally exploit and abuse them. In doing so then, border crossers challenge mainstream policy makers’ discourses, which label the smugglers and traffickers as “mafias” and “ruthless criminal networks” (Andersson, 2014a, p. 14), by also revealing the corruption which is often state-sanctioned and state-involved. Border crossers also refer to smugglers/traffickers as “dal lals” (Khosravi, 2011, p. 56), “coyotes” (Khosravi, 2011, p. 104; Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007, p. 225), “qachaqbar” (Afghanistan Research Evaluation Unit, 2005, p. i). “Qachaqbar” was one of the first Persian words I learned when I started working in Pagani detention centre.

Trafficking and smuggling is one of the most profitable organised crimes along with the illegal trade of weapons and drugs (euro2day, 2013). Paradoxically, however this trade as Ruben Andersson notes, “grows alongside tougher [border] controls” (Andersson, 2014a, p. 14). During my research on Lesbos I interviewed *Soltan*, a border crosser from Afghanistan who told me that he had to spend several days sleeping at the mountains in the cold, risking dying from hypothermia, dehydration and starvation,

You know I came with a qacaqbar [smuggler] from Afghanistan. For five days I was travelling from Afghanistan to Turkey. All this time I was living on the mountains in the cold, without water and food. For five days! The qacaqbar did not allow us to light fire. We said, “Why we cannot light any fire? We will die from cold” and he said, “It is not my problem if you are going to die. You must wait here until I find a track to transfer you to another place”. We were waiting for five days on the mountains and after that the track came and transferred us to another place near the Turkish borders.

Similarly, *Mokhtar*, a border crosser from Syria told me that his smuggler let him and his group to stay to a house without food and water for days,

The smuggler took us to a house and we stayed there for one week. It was an abandoned place with holes on walls. You know in these places you might find yourself sleeping where sheep are living. In this house there was no water to drink and the smuggler gave us just coke-cola, no food just coke-cola and you know how bad coke-cola is for an empty stomach, particularly if you have not eaten anything for days. I have never drunk coke-cola again since then.

Testimonies about the corruption and the involvement of state officials in the exploitation of border crossers within the border zones and transit countries are reported from activist groups and the border crossers themselves. Amnesty International has reported the corruption of the Libyan police officers who abuse, detain border crossers and extort for money in exchange their freedom (Amnesty International, 2017c, p. 8; Khosravi, 2011, p. 20). Louise Shelley argues that state’s corruption plays a pivotal role within this industry, “Corruption is deeply connected to the problem of trafficking in Europe: travel agencies, border guards, customs officers, and other diplomatic personnel must be bribed or extorted for trafficking to be successful” (2014, p. 10). *Abbas*, a border crosser from Syria on Lesbos, told me that he had to bribe border guards in exchange of not being deported. As *Abbas* said,

Once, police came in one of the smuggler’s houses. I was sleeping on the first floor when late in the night seven to eight police officers entered the house. I immediately informed all the guys who were living in the same house with me. The police officers arrested us and told us that we were going to be deported. We offered them 500 dollars in exchange of our freedom. This is how we got away from danger.

Sams, a border crosser from Afghanistan told me that he was exploited and robbed by Iranian police officers, “We were arrested by the police at the borders who took us into a small room. They put spray in our eyes and as a result we were unable to see. After that

they stole our belongings. Some guys had money on them. Police officers took the money and then they let us go.”

Border crossers are confronted with multiple visible and invisible, hard and closed borders all throughout their journey to Europe. Those borders are constantly being erected by the violent and harmful deterrence and externalisation policies implemented in the name of saving lives. Without having any other option of following safe passages which lead to Europe, border crossers are coerced to turn to the trafficking and smuggling networks and being exposed to multiple and multilayered border harms and violence. And although EU policy makers claim that the securitisation and militarisation of borders is implemented in order to tackle the criminal smuggling and trafficking networks according to Hein De Haas,

While politicians and the media routinely blame “smugglers” for the suffering and dying at Europe's borders, this diverts the attention away from the fact that smuggling is a reaction to the militarisation of border controls, not the cause of irregular migration. Ironically, policies to ‘combat’ smuggling and irregular migration are bound to fail because they are among the very causes of the phenomenon they claim to ‘fight’ (De Haas, 2015).

Neither trafficking/smuggling networks, nor the border mafia would exist if there were no politics of deterrence, externalisation and closed borders which have transformed mobility into a profitable human trade by pushing people directly into the wolf’s mouth. In section 4.2.4, I will discuss the collateral casualties in human cost of the politics of closed borders, deterrence and externalisation implemented by EU in the name of care, protection and public order. I will show that the “care” of theirs has in practice generated and enforced a further commodification and devaluation of human lives and of what it means to be human.

4.2.4 Coerced Choices, Autonomy Harms and Commodification

The hardships we have gone through, the sea, the sufferings... We did
not just pay with money; we paid with our blood, our souls.
(in Papageorgiou & Spathis, 2017)

The concept coerced choices is deliberately introduced and deployed in this thesis. By doing so I am not claiming that border crossers are powerless, passive victims lacking agency and free will. All human beings have agency to formulate choices. The survival

strategies border crossers adopt throughout their border trajectories, as well as their defiance of the border regime, shows agency and autonomy. I am using here the concept of coerced choices in relation to extortion, bondage, and debt (O'Connell Davidson, 2013), and the obligation of paying it off as dominant features of the unauthorised border crossing. Extortion, debt and the obligation of paying it off play a crucial role in the formulation of border crossers' choices, and thus their autonomy. Due to the overpriced journeys, debt is a means for border crossers to finance and secure a place within a car, lorry or boat which leads to Europe. However, being indebted in order to finance the journey and being obliged to pay off, highlights the asymmetrical power relations, extortion and dependency which exist between border crossers and the people who facilitate their journey. As Julia O'Connell Davidson argues,

Financing migration through debt can be an active choice without also being a 'voluntary' or 'autonomous' choice, and migrants' decisions to take on debts that will imply heavy restrictions on their freedom are taken in the context of migration and other policies that severely constrain their alternatives (2013, p. 176).

Coerced choices are thus highlighting this oxymoron; that border crossers are not victims and powerless, but at the same time their choices are not entirely free. Thus, coerced choices concept is also deployed here through a social harm perspective and, and are considered as autonomy (Pemberton, 2015, p. 29) and financial/ economic harms (Dorling et al., 2008, p. 15; Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Tombs, 2019) inflicted upon border crossers (see also Chapter 1/ Section 1.2). Poverty, need and being indebted can lead to extortion and dependency by limiting border crossers' autonomous choices, and coercing them to consent and engage in harmful activities which otherwise they would not. What I found during my research was various forms of debt for which border crossers were indebted, obliged and extorted to pay off with various forms of economic transactions so as to be allowed to cross the borders. As academic research shows due to the flourishing of the illicit human trade market the multiple forms of "clandestine migration services can lead a number of different forms of debt to a variety of different third parties" (O'Connell Davidson, 2013, p. 179). Three dominant types of transaction and extortion based on debt and the obligation of paying off are the financial debt, labour debt, and sexual debt. Here border crossers' bodies and lives are playing a crucial role as objects, commodities or tokens of economic transaction and manipulation. As Nancy Scheper-Hughes argues, "a broad concept of commodification, encompassing all capitalised economic relations between humans in which human bodies are the token of economic exchanges (...)" (2003, p. 2). Due to the fact that this unauthorised human mobility is class structured it is

mainly the poor who are to suffer more exploitation and agonising mobility. The ones “who have nothing more to sell”, as Khosravi notes, “advertise their organs for sale” (Khosravi, 2017, p. 176). Border crossers’ bodies -through their labour, organs or sexual “services” often in the form of rapes- were used as a token or voucher of economic transactions within this (in)human trade. These features are related to the boosting of a profitable and demanding neoliberal capitalist human trade market which is merchandising border crosser’s bodies -in whole or in parts- as commodities.

The oxymoronic term coerced choices is linked with the mobility of the poorest because, due to their structural and marginal position, they are more likely to be indebted, extorted and make unbearable coerced choices. Also, at the altar of profit of the obscene neoliberal capitalism (some) lives, mainly of the poor and marginalised, “can both gain and lose value during their journeys in material and embodied ways” (Vogt, 2013, p. 765).

4.2.4.1 Financial Debt

Border crossings are fragmented, expensive and not always successful, which means one might have to repeat them several times in order to reach one’s destination. Many border crossers are coerced to sell all their belongings and property, their allotments and homes in order to gather money and pay the smugglers. *Arzoo* told me that in order to gather money for the journey to Europe her family had to sell all of their belongings in Afghanistan. The debt not only burdens the travellers but also burdens those who are left behind, the family and friends (Chu, 2010). Therefore, not paying off the debt is not a choice. Due to the fact that border crossings are lengthy and fragmented, many of the border crossers I interviewed had to work for months and even for years in border zones and transit countries in order to gather money to pay (off) the smugglers. Many of them were confronted with more exploitation. *Adam*, a border crosser from Ghana told me that he had to stay for six months in Turkey to work in order to find money to pay the smuggler but he was exploited and attacked by gangs, “I stayed in Turkey for six months. I worked in a restaurant there, but I never got paid. They were always saying “next week, next week”. They are still holding my money. In Turkey I was attacked and robbed twice by a gang after returning from work.”

Many border crossers are not able to pay the *tariff* to the smuggler and commit to pay off their debt when they reach Europe. Paying off the debt is inevitable. Smugglers/traffickers under the use or threat of violence against border crossers themselves and family members and under the threat of physical violence or even voodoo, as it often happens to women border crossers from various parts of West Africa (DW, 2010; Independent Advisory

Group on Country Information, 2016), secure the collection of the debt. Other border crossers I interviewed on Lesbos in order to finance their journey were coerced to be indebted to the smuggler. *Javid* another border crosser from Afghanistan could not pay his smuggler in advance so he had to make a deal with him and pay in instalments,

I paid the smuggler half of the money in cash and the other half was paid by both my parents and me when I found a work. I paid myself 400 EUROS to the smugglers when I reached Greece. One cannot avoid paying the smugglers because they can keep you as a hostage and they might even cut your fingers, nails or ears. Smugglers are capable of doing anything. They can find you. They have people who can find you. In every country that you are they have people and they can find you and harm either you or members of your family.

The financial harms which are inflicted upon border crossers in order to overtake their journey to Europe cannot easily be measured, estimated and known. The property loss varies and is dependent on the real value of the property and the price which was eventually sold. Border crossers, for instance, can sell their main household in case they do not have cash to pay the traffickers/smugglers. This means that they can sell their house in any price because of need. This might also lead to the homelessness of the rest of the family which is left behind due to the fact that the border crossing is very expensive. Allotments are frequently sold too, which might lead to destitution and precariousness for the rest of the family which is left behind, since an allotment could be the only means for living. Cash loss varies too. The most common type is as described above and is related with the fact that border crossers are engaging with the informal economy and often become exploited by their employees.

4.2.4.2 Labour-debt

A common feature of labour-debt is that many border crossers are coerced to work as recruiters, facilitators and even as drivers of the boats in exchange for a free “pass” in the boat which leads to Europe. According to Khosravi, “many smugglers were themselves migrants or refugees who engaged in the business for a few years before going to the West. In addition, there was a number of dealers, middlemen and lackeys who worked for the smugglers” (Khosravi 2010, p. 39). *Aarash*, an Afghan border crosser interviewee, was coerced to engage in smuggler’s businesses in Turkey in exchange for a free pass to Greece. As *Aarash* noted,

I worked for days in Turkey, but I could not gather the money I needed for the journey. I started then working for the smuggler. I was recruiting people. I had agreed with a smuggler to find ten people for him and he promised that if I do this, he would send me to Greece for

free. I did that, but he did not send me to Greece as he had promised. Then the smuggler told me to find five more people. I managed to find three. The smuggler found one more and the fifth person was me. Thus, he finally sent me to Greece.

Many border crossers engage with smuggler's businesses as facilitators or recruiters of other border crossers in order to pay off the debt and to be allowed to travel for free. However, this is risky since if they will be caught by the authorities they will be sentenced for many years as "smugglers" or "traffickers". As *Kamran*, an Iranian interviewee observed,

This is something usual because there are people in need like me who do not have money. And this is beneficial for the smuggler because he does not want to risk his life in order to recruit people and thus he uses refugees as recruiters of other refugees. The smuggler in order to convince refugees to collaborate with him asks the refugee-recruiter to advertise him to others as a good businessman, whose clients were sent to Greece without being deported or arrested by the police. In exchange, the smuggler guarantees a free pass to the boat.

Other border crossers agree to drive the boat during the unauthorised crossing, risking arrest by the authorities and being charged with many years of incarceration as traffickers. As *Kamran* says,

Often, the smugglers ask the refugees to drive the boat from Turkey to Greece in order to be allowed to travel for free. The boat usually operates with an engine and the only condition is the refugee to touch with his own hands the boat's steering wheel. However, refugees who are arrested by the police driving the boat are punished. They are arrested and sent to jail as traffickers. These persons are going to prison for nothing, because they are not smugglers, they are refugees who simply do not have money to pay the smuggler and they are desperate to enter Europe.

These are autonomy and financial harms inflicted upon border crossers who without having any other options of a safe passage to Europe and also without having the ability to control their circumstances, they are coerced to become smugglers' "employees", "recruiters" or "drivers".

4.2.4.3 Sexual debt

Another harmful feature of this human trade is the "sexual debt". In lack of any other option, due to destitution, asymmetrical power relations, and dependency border crossers are coerced or extorted to finance their journey by providing sexual "services" to the smugglers/ traffickers, border guards and the other intermediates. By considering the fact

that border crossers do not have alternative options, and thus the element of coercion and extortion is central and dominant within all aspects of their multiple journeys to Europe, by formulating the choices they have, I consider the practice of sex even when there is “consent” as extortion, coercion and thus rape. Border rapes are “a border tariff and border transgressors are raped to get permission to cross” (Khosravi, 2011, p. 40). *Contra* to other systematic rape practices which take place in genocides, ethnic cleansing, armed (internal) conflicts and wars as a strategy and military policy in order to terrorise, displace, defeat, “feminise”, humiliate and shame whole communities and populations (Amnesty International, 2014; Falcón, 2001; Reid-Cunningham, 2008), border crossers due to poverty and desperation, are extorted and “consent” to be raped by the smuggler(s), border guards and others in order to be allowed to pass to the boat which leads to Europe (Amnesty International, 2016a; Andersson, 2014a; Khosravi, 2007). It must be noted that border crossers often are not “offered” the option to “consent” and finance their journey through “sexual debt” and are brutally raped from border station to border station, before and after the journey, *en route* and even within the boat. As *Tasos*, one of the volunteers I interviewed told me, “Raped women were so many that after a point we were distributing abortion pills to almost all refugee women arriving”. Border rapes are a manifestation of the obscene, gender, sexualised, patriarchal borders which obsessively target unaccompanied women, LGBTQ people, unaccompanied minors, and young men.

The aforementioned forms of debt are not the only coerced choices which border crossers are forced to make in order to finance their journey to Europe, to survive and due to their hierarchically and structurally marginal position. Another form of debt is the “organ debt”. Border crossers in order to finance their journey or generally in order to survive are coerced to “consent” to organ removal, which are broadly circulated and sold as commodities in the organ trafficking and transplantation industry (Budiani-Saberi & Columb, 2013; Kannan, 2014; Panjabi, 2010). Furthermore, border crossers find themselves indebted and/or bonded into: coerced bonded labour in the agricultural sector, fishing industry; get enslaved into forced marriages; children on the move are enslaved in (sexual) labour, trafficking, and forced participation in armed conflicts as child soldiers (Adesina, 2014; Fein, 2016; Hynes, 2018; Lewis, Waite, & Lewis, 2015; Lowenkron, 2015; Murphy, 2014; Puente Aba, 2018; Reichel & Randa, 2018; Simmons & Burnt, 2013; Strauss, 2012; The Guardian, 2017, 2018b; UNODC, 2016; Wright, 2017). These forms of commodification and the range of harms which are inflicted upon border crossers will be analysed in more depth in the future.

4.3 Safe Havens and Prison Islands: The Internalisation of the EU Borders

Humane law does not recognise any border. Borders are constructed by inhumane minds (in Khosravi, 2011, p. 108)

In the aftermath of the refugee crisis, the violence and suffering against border crossers at the Greek- Macedonian (FYROM) borders, which was escalated after the shutting down of the Balkan Route (Human Rights Watch, 2016), and the increased border-related deaths into the Aegean Sea (International Organisation for Migration, 2016), EU adopted and implemented multilayered and multilateral policies in the name of humanitarianism, public order (“end the human suffering and restore the public order” (European Council, 2016: p. 1) and responsibility to protect (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001; United Nations, 2005). According to the UN office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect,

The responsibility to protect embodies a political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution. It seeks to narrow the gap between Member States’ pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (United Nations, 2005).

By drawing on the paradigm of externalisation, the EU implemented externalisation policies by pushing this time borders inwards (Hess & Kasperek, 2017, p. 63). This process is framed as “internalisation” of borders within European countries like Greece, and vividly echoes Blair’s vision of Safe Havens (see Section 4.1). Gradually, Greece due to the internalisation policies from a traditionally in-between country was turned into a protracted waiting room. The internalisation policies which crucially affected Greece and particularly Lesvos were the EU-Turkey Statement, the Geographical Restriction regime and the Hotspot Approach.

4.3.1 The EU-Turkey Statement

In 18 March 2016 in a common Statement, EU and Greece recognised Turkey as a “safe third country” and “a first country of asylum” even though Turkey has been criticised for the systematic violations of human rights and violence (Amnesty International, 2016b). This practically meant that, “all new border crossers entering from Turkey into the Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey”, as well as “Migrants not

applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive will be returned to Turkey” (European Council & Council of Europe, 2016). For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, the EU agreed that a Syrian will be resettled from Turkey to the EU – up to a maximum of 72,000 persons (Gatti, 2016). In order to comply with the Statement, Turkey agreed to “readmit non-Turkish nationals to its territory, from June 2016; to apply a previously-agreed plan on the status of Syrian refugees in Turkey; and to prevent non-EU citizens from leaving” (Peers & Roman, 2016).

The EU-Turkey Statement has systematically been criticised as a non-legal document or juridical international agreement, meaning that is only a deal, “an agreement for the mutual benefit of the two parties” (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2018b), which however does not bind Greece to implement it (Amnesty International, 2016b; Chios Law Bar Association, 2016; Refugee Support Aegean, 2018). Moreover, Amnesty International stated that the EU-Turkey Statement is governed by “moral and legal flaws” and urged the Greek government to completely reject it (Amnesty International, 2016b). The EU-Turkey Statement has also been criticised as dehumanising, for it ignores the very people at the heart of the refugee crisis by “significantly eroding their rights” (Amnesty International, 2016b). It has also being criticised as violating “European and international law, since it might lead to collective expulsions and may not give asylum-seekers an effective opportunity to apply for international protection in the EU” (Gatti, 2016, p. 1). Furthermore, due to the recognition of Turkey as a safe country almost all asylum claims potentially can be assessed as “unfounded” and “inadmissible” resulting in massive expulsions, deportations or readmissions of border crossers back to Turkey (Amnesty International, 2016b; Gatti, 2016, p. 1). Additionally, the EU-Turkey Statement has been criticised for legitimising Turkey as a “safe” country although systematic violations of human rights, violence, a dysfunctional asylum system, inequalities in access to protection, degrading living conditions and coerced expulsions of border crossers from Turkey have been reported (Amnesty International, 2016b; Gatti, 2016).

However, one severe challenge to the idea of Turkey as a safe country is the social and political conditions implemented particularly in the aftermath of the post-military Coup era. After the unsuccessful military coup in Turkey massive arrests, abuses, violations of human rights and liberties of Turkish citizens and military men took place (Amnesty International, 2018b). The Head Director of Amnesty International, journalists and judges in Turkey are arbitrary arrested (Amnesty International, 2018b; Sputnik news, 2017a,

2017b). In the aftermath of the Turkish military coup an increased number of Turkish citizens have attempted to cross the Greek -Turkish borders and seek international protection from fear of persecution of Erdogan's regime (Stockholm Centre for Freedom, 2018). On Lesbos coasts, the dead bodies of Turkish citizens, including families, have been washed ashore, whilst activists have reported systematic push-backs of Turkish citizens in the Evros region (Greek Council For Refugees, 2018). Turkish citizens living in Germany have sought international protection there from fear of persecution in Turkey (China Economic Net, 2018; Global security, 2017). On 2017 eight Turkish military men entered Greece with a military helicopter to seek international protection and they were granted the refugee status on the grounds that Turkey is not a safe country for them (Associated Press, 2016). Although Greece recognised Turkey as unsafe for Turkish citizens nevertheless, it recognised and legitimised Turkey as a safe country for border crossers.

4.3.2 The Geographical Restriction Regime

After the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement via a decision of the Asylum Service director (Efimerida tis Kyvernisis, 2017) the ambivalent "geographical restriction regime" was re-enforced in complying with the terms and conditions of the EU-Turkey Statement. Under the geographical restriction regime all new border crossers arriving at the Greek Islands after the 20th of March 2016 are stranded by the Greek authorities, until their bureaucratic and asylum procedures are completed (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016d). According to *Sophia* one of my interviewees, a lawyer and activist supporting refugees in Lesbos, the Greek Government is determined to implement the EU-Turkey Statement and the Geographical Restriction Regime "no matter what",

Turkey does not accept refugees back if it is proved that returnees [border crossers] are returned from another part of Greece and not from the islands. The EU-Turkey Statement says; "From the Greek Islands only! Do not return refugees [to Turkey] from Korinthos [Greek mainland]. Those keep them'!

Meanwhile, the legality and even the validity of the Geographical Restriction Regime per se is being challenged by activists and Non-Governmental Organisations as constituting a deprivation of liberty and against the Greek Constitution (Amnesty International, 2016b; Chios Law Bar Association, 2016, p. 11). Chios Law Bar Association (2016, p. 11), notes that this rule is only an outcome of interpretation and thus a political decision per se.

The EU-Turkey Statement does not define that refugees are obliged to stay at the Greek Islands until their asylum application is being processed. Refugees and migrants' obligatory staying is an outcome of an interpretation. However, the way this interpretation is

implemented until now is against both the Greek Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights. Hence, refugees and migrants who enter Greece through the Greek Islands should have the right to move to the Greek mainland until their asylum application is examined (2016, p. 15).

On April 2018 the Greek Council of State, the supreme administrative court of justice, issued a decision which was annulling the Asylum Service Director's decision (Efimeridatis Kyvernisis, 2017) concerning the geographical restriction of border crossers on the Greek Islands. The Greek Council of State acknowledged that the geographical restriction forced border crossers to live in structurally violent conditions and highlighted that,

the Decision of the Asylum Service Director does not set out legal grounds for the imposition of restrictions on border crossers' freedom of movement, and deduced no serious reasons of public interest to justify the necessity of the restriction in accordance with Article 31(2) of the Refugee Convention (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2018a).

However, the decision of the Greek Council of State, which would provide relief to thousands of border crossers on Lesbos, was not in practice put into effect due to the Asylum Service's new Director, who after the court's decision claimed public order and security reasons. The decision of the geographical restriction regime which was re-enforced by the Asylum Service Director raises legal, political and moral issues and also evidences that the Greek authorities are determined to implement this rule "no matter what". The decision also manifests the institutional and administrative violence border crossers are exposed to on Lesbos by the administration per se. How and why an administrative service, as the Asylum Service is, is legitimised and authorised not to abide with the rule of the Greek State Court? To quote Vickie Cooper and David Whyte,

Violence committed at the institutional level (...) is not delivered by 'street gangs' or by the individuals that are typically the focus of public anxieties and tabloid moral panics. The [institutional] violence is delivered by smartly dressed people sitting behind desks. And if we are looking for people to blame for [institutional] violence, we may not get very far. In front of the (...) politicians who designed this agenda (...) stand the armies of civil servants, government departments and Local Authorities (2017, p. 23).

The geographical restriction regime and the enduring immobilisation of border crossers within Lesbos (and the other islands) created a prison context physically and symbolically,

an enormous territorial and geographical limbo. As if the long and dangerous journeys from one violent border to another, from harm to harm, and from limbo to limbo were not enough, border crossers additionally found themselves to be captives and prisoners of the Greek state and the EU. The geographical restriction regime indefinitely immobilised border crossers on Lesbos by creating a spatial confinement context, where the prison is not located only within Moria camp but everywhere on the Island. According to Katja Franko Aas, “one does not need prisons to be, or feel, incarcerated in the locality” (2007, p. 293). As *Sariad*, a Syrian border crosser, puts it by echoing most of my interviewees, “The Island is like a prison; the only difference now is that there are no fences; there is instead the sea.”

4.3.3 The Hotspot Approach

The hotspot system for the containment, regulation and control of the unwanted border crossers is not something new. It was put in effect on May 2015 within the European Agenda of Migration and under “the Hotspot Approach to Managing Exceptional Migratory Flows” policy (European Commission, 2017b). Under the Hotspot Approach scheme, EU via multiple EU agencies (EASO, Europol, Frontex, and Eurojust) demonstrated its “support” to Greece and Italy in order to cope with the massive influx of border crossers arriving. Through the lens of the hotspot approach Greek islands and particularly Lesbos were turned into a securitised and militarised space by inaugurating the semi settlement, symbiosis and operation of multiple national and EU bodies; The Greek police and Coastguard, the Greek army, the European Union’s law Enforcement Agency (Europol), the European Union Borders and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), the European Union’s Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the Greek Asylum service, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and various International and Non-Governmental Organisations. At the same time, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has also been deployed in order to patrol the Aegean Sea and “assist” in tackling the “criminal trafficking networks”, which were blamed for the deaths of hundreds of border crossers (BBC NEWS, 2016; NATO, 2016). NATO’s operations at the Aegean Sea inaugurated and established a whole new geopolitical epoch as far as the militarisation of the Aegean Sea is concerned (Garelli & Tazzioli, 2016).

In 2015, Moria camp was transformed into a “hotspot centre” (Council of the European Union, 2015), where all the aforementioned EU agencies, International and Non-

Governmental Organisations managed the processes of asylum, debriefing, screening, identification, registration and other bureaucratic processes until now (European Commission, 2017b, pp. 15–16). According to the European Commission’s report a hotspot is described as “an area at the EU’s external border which faces disproportionate migratory pressure” (2017b, p. 14). Until the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement on March 2016 hotspots on the islands were, as Martina Tazzioli and Glenda Garelli argue, “dock-and-go” where border crossers were completing their registration and identification procedures relatively fast and then they were moving to the Greek mainland (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018, p. 2). In the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement and the Geographical Restriction Regime, Moria camp was turned into a “closed” detention centre and Lesbos into a Prison island (Tazzioli, 2016). Due to the overcrowded facilities within Moria hotspot the practice of confinement of all border crossers was proved to be practically impossible and eventually was merely implemented for some border crossers; the unaccompanied minors through the lens of “protective custody”, and the deportable nationalities detained inside the Section B (see Chapter 5). From this angle, the hotspot approach combined with the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction regime produced different multilayered material and symbolic incarcerations of border crossers on Lesbos inside, outside and beyond the camp of Moria, what Tazzioli and Garelli name as “containment beyond detention” (2018, p. 2) (see also Chapter 6); that is to say, “forms of containment that take place outside of the fences of detention centres while being strictly connected with them” (2018, p. 4) .

Conclusion

When I first visited Lesbos for fieldwork on October 2016, only a few months after the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, there were approximately 6,000 border crossers immobilised indefinitely in a state of precariousness, destitution and limbo within the official, unofficial and makeshift camps of the island in degrading, humiliating and appalling living and reception conditions (see Chapter 5). The implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, combined with the other deterrence tools (Section 4.1 and Chapter 5) succeeded in decreasing the migration flows, just as policy makers had hoped for (International Organisation for Migration, 2017a). At the same time, it “succeeded” in increasing the death tolls, harms and human suffering of border crossers who since then have been following alternative and more risky routes mainly through Italy, Spain and Cyprus in order to reach safety (International Organisation for Migration, 2017a). Furthermore, harm and suffering is inflicted upon border crossers who are permanently

stranded in a state of limbo within border zones, formal and makeshift camps in Lesvos, Greece and elsewhere (Chapter 5). After the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement self-harms and suicide attempts of border crossers on Lesvos took place as an expression of despair and fear of coerced deportations (Chapter 5) in harmful and lifethreatening conditions.

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, the awkward ongoing “armed love” enforcement in the aftermath of the “refugee crisis” under the rubric of deterrence, externalisation and internalisation, is deeply engrained, and has brought more misery, suffering and death upon border-crossers’ lives. Not only border crossers face the multiple forms of militarised borders before they even reach Europe, due to the externalisation policies and bilateral agreements of the EU with non-EU countries, but they additionally found themselves against the violent (land and sea) borders and thresholds as well as border harms *en route* to Europe. But even when they reach Europe, as the Lesvos case shows, border crossers are confronted with a Kafkaesque militarised, securitised, bureaucratised complex, which regulates their everyday lives (see Chapter 5 and 6) and is enforced from the internalisation policies. The implementation of deterrent politics in order to prevent border crossers from entering or moving forward to European soils created a prison within the prison context in Lesvos and elsewhere. The metaphor of Lesvos as a Prison Island encapsulates the fact that there are multilayered and multiple forms of bigger and smaller, actual, symbolic and metaphorical detentions, prisons, confinements and imprisonment of border crossers beyond the actual, material prisons incarnated via barbered walls, cells, surveillance cameras, closed gates and gatekeepers. The metaphor of Lesvos as the Prison Island is one of these symbolic incarnations of imprisonment beyond the actual prison and a devastating aspect of the violence and the multiple forms of social harm border crossers are experiencing on Lesvos (see Chapter 6). Without being able to move either forward or back but restricted in a piece of earth surrounded by the deep blue sea, border crossers are held in multiple forms of limbo.

In the next chapter I will discuss the consequences of the internalisation policies and their collateral casualties in human cost. I will focus on the bureaucratic deterrence and thus “the ‘ordinary’ and ‘mundane’ bureaucratised face of violence” (Cooper & Whyte, 2017, p. 23) and the multilayered forms of everyday violence border crossers experience on Lesvos. Finally, I will discuss the material and symbolic confinements beyond the camps and hotspots as they are manifested through the Prison Island and I will highlight the

multilayered and multiple forms of structural violence, harms and even death deliberately inflicted upon the poor and marginalised of this kind of human mobility.

CHAPTER 5

“Make their Lives Unliveable”: The Harms and Violence of Reception, Asylum, Detention and Bureaucracy

In the previous chapter I focused on the politics of deterrence, externalisation and internalisation which were proliferated in the aftermath of the refugee crisis and which made the border crossings even more violent and fatal. This Chapter is divided into two parts. In Part I, I will refer to the reception, registration, identification and asylum procedures implemented upon arrival. I will also refer to the overwhelming inconsistency, confusion and bureaucratisation of the procedures which have condemned border crossers to an enduring discomfort, uncertainty, waiting and bureaucratic limbo. I will focus on the structural violence and social harm, which the processes per se inflict upon border crossers, as they become trapped within them, and on the “structural violations of human rights” (Ho, 2007) which in turn exacerbate harm. I will refer to the blatant violation of the principal right of having access to international protection in terms of; (i) restricted “physical” access to the procedures and the responsible/relevant bodies in order to lodge in an application; (ii) restricted access to accurate, timely and effective information about international protection; (iii) restricted access to legal aid; (iv) safeguarding of the principal of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality. As I found the violations of these principals inflicted severe harms including the coerced deportations and refoulement of border crossers in life threatening and violent conditions. I will then refer to what I call “bureaucratic deterrence”, meaning the intentional, well-designed policy of deterring by gradually, slowly and silently ‘killing’ those who have sought international protection in Europe. The “bureaucratic deterrence” is the apotheosis of the politics of discomfort (Darling, 2011, p. 268) and the unease (Bigo 2002). As I will explain, the “bureaucratic deterrence” includes an overwhelming bureaucratisation, procedural chaos, inconsistency and uncertainty, enduring waiting and queuing, maze-like and mentally exhausting procedures, which border crossers must adhere to while living in harmful, life threatening, humiliating and degrading reception and living conditions. In this way, border crossers are deterred and indirectly coerced by the authorities to withdraw their asylum claims, and either traverse alternative dangerous illicit migratory pathways to other European countries or “voluntarily” return to their countries of origin.

In Part II, I will consider the harmful, humiliating, degrading and appalling living conditions of border crossers within Moria hotspot, the structural violence and social harm border crossers experience. I refer to this form of violence as *obscene*, drawing on the work of scholars and activists (Beneduce, 2015, p. 559; Biehl, 2013; De Genova, 2013; Mbembe, 1992, p. 5; Migreurop, 2017), because it coerces people to destitution and precariousness by indirectly coercing them to do unspeakable and harmful things, which otherwise they would not, in order to survive. Unwanted pregnancies, survival sex, coerced marriages, smuggling are only few of the multiple forms of this obscene violence I found unfolding as both “manifest and latent” (Galtung, 1969, p. 172) on Lesbos. The apotheosis of obscenity is that this violence is avoidable but deeply built within the structures. Finally, it is emphasised how this obscene violence is intentional not random, an outcome of political decisions, of acts of omission and commission.

Vignette: The Borders of Bureaucracy and Inconsistency

In overcrowded cells, without having any access to the yard even for a few minutes, border crossers were standing behind the blue bars of their dirty and overcrowded cell in Pagani detention. Unable to reach me they used to nod at me in order to approach them. Small pieces of papers from boxes, toothpaste packages and information leaflets were circulated from hand to hand, from cell to cell, through the blue bars of the cell by ending up in the outside world; to me. Handwritten names, ages, nationalities, other personal data, questions, requests or complains were a usual form of communication in the absence of any interpreter or an English-speaking detainee who could serve as an informal interpreter and as an intermediate between border crossers and me. The lack of interpretation could directly lead to isolation since many non-English speaking border crossers were condemned to silence or in dependent relations with other detainees. “Why some people are leaving before us even though we have spent more days inside prison in comparison to them”? “Is this fair?” and “Are we forgotten here?” were in so to speak the frequently asked questions. Those small pieces of paper were given to me with a hope that the problem would soon be resolved.

When I started working in Pagani detention centre the whole registration, identification, bureaucratic and asylum procedures were in the hands of the police. This fact generated a series of problems, delays, uncertainty and confusion to border crossers who were stuck within a system which did not make sense at all. As I wandered through the administrative maze of the registration and identification procedure, which was managed by the police, I came across a very awkward, chaotic and inefficient system which caused many problems,

not only to border crossers but to the police officers themselves. All the bureaucratic, administrative and identification procedures were taking place simultaneously in several different parts of the island, in several different police departments from different police officers. Depending on the time and the spot of arrival at the island the responsible for the region police department was authorised to do the arrest, the identification, registration and bureaucratic procedures before border crossers were transported to Pagani. When border crossers were transferred to Pagani upon arrival the police officer on shift would handwrite border crossers' personal data in a notebook. Due to the lack of interpretation and the fact that many police officers did not speak English at all, the vast majority of border crossers' personal data were either misspelled or incorrect. As a result, when the police officer from the Alien's Bureau of Mytilene's Police department would come to find an individual in order to take photos and continue with the bureaucratic procedures, he would sometimes spend hours or even days in order to find that person. As a result, many border crossers could spend weeks in Pagani but without the bureaucratic process having begun at all. For border crossers whose bureaucratic procedures had already taken place, frequent mistakes during registration could cause extreme delays by pushing the process back to the start. Frequent mistakes during registration could "metamorphose" Iranian border crossers to Afghans, Egyptians and Algerians to Syrians, and Africans to Somalians. As police officers cynically used to say, "They all look the same". Similarly, unaccompanied minors were metamorphosed into adults and the adults into unaccompanied minors. The police were registering the age of all border crossers according to what each individual was claiming and also depending on the police officer's rough estimation and guess; meaning whether the border crossers looked like as adults or minors according to their physical appearance. In a big notebook named as the "book of arriving and departing foreign nationals" located inside Police's office in Pagani, detainees' personal data (name, age, and nationality) the number of their cell and the dates of arrival and/or departure were recorded, similarly to hotel bookings where tourists' dates of departures and arrivals are registered. By searching within this awkward notebook one could tell or at least theoretically find in which cell each detainee was living, the date of her/his arrival and departure, if s/he had a family detained somewhere in the building and also the personal information of the people who were travelling in the same boat. All the information which was stored inside this notebook was handwritten and managed by all the police officers who were working on shifts there. From 2008, when I started working until 2010, when Pagani closed, border crossers' sensitive data were kept in one and only handwritten notebook. There was no computer, no database or any electronic source of recording,

saving and storing the data and as some of the police officers were arguing, that even if they had a database or software they would not know how to use it. The size and the length of the notebook, its colour, boring appearance, unpractical large size which made it look like a papyrus, was for me the exemplar of the image of bureaucracy and inconsistency of the Greek public services. The notebook was often torn apart because of its regular use and unpractical size. At the same time, this was in reality very difficult to be used as a source of data. I could spend hours every day in order to find a detainee's personal data. There were many mistakes, misspellings and misinformation. Border crossers were dehumanised by being locked in a depersonalised environment, as all refugee camps and detention centres are, and by also losing their name, their past and identity. All these combined with the mistakes, misspellings and misunderstandings during the registration denoted the fragile balance between the (non)status of the unauthorised border crosser (a person who is "illegal") and the status of the non-person (a person who does not exist). As an outcome many of the detainees were "stucked" into detention for an uncertain prolonged period, waiting for their day of freedom to come. Unaccompanied minors were unluckier since misspells or mistakes during the registration could result in spending more time into prison. The bureaucratic procedures surrounding the unaccompanied minors were lengthy and the unwillingness of the local authorities to process them even bigger. Police officers never admitted that they were doing mistakes and usually accused detainees for lying during registration from fear of being deported. After the registration procedures were completed all the data were sent to the central police station in the capital of Lesbos, in Mytilene. A similar approach was applied by the port police. The competitive relationship between the two forces was dominant and expressed mainly through the denial in taking the responsibility of newly arrived border crossers' arrests and registrations. For instance, when the police wanted to avoid arresting border crossers, they used to ask "From where did border crossers come from? From the sea or land? Ah, from the sea! They are not our responsibility, call the port police".

PART I

5.1 Reception and Identification Procedures

On October 2015, the first hotspot was established and started operating on Lesbos (Danish Refugee Council, 2017, p. 11), serving initially as an open and "transit" site for registering border crossers arriving to Greece (Tazzioli, 2016). After the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, Moria hotspot was turned into a "closed detention facility and all new

arrivals were effectively deprived of their liberty” (ECPT, 2017, p. 11; Tazzioli, 2016 see also Chapter 4). Within Moria hotspot an asylum and bureaucratic regime has been enforced with the operation of multiple national and EU agencies and bodies (see Chapter 4). As the Danish Refugee Council notes, “the Greek hotspots play a crucial role in the operation of the [EU-Turkey] Statement” (2017, p. 8). The hotspot approach as a policy precedes the EU-Turkey Statement and is responsible for the border regime people in Lesvos and border crossers are experiencing until today. The EU-Turkey Statement is also genealogically interlinked with the hotspot approach and is also its continuum (Antonakaki et al., 2016, pp. 3–4). The hotspot approach manifested the criticism and reluctance of EU policy makers to establish consistent, standardised and efficient registration, fingerprinting and identification system for border crossers arriving in countries like Greece and Italy (Antonakaki et al., 2016, p. 3; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015, p. 54). Currently, Moria hotspot is both a Reception and Identification Centre and a hotspot, which operates as an open camp for some and a closed (detention) site for others. As the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment noted after an inspection on Lesvos, “Most persons were no longer deprived of their liberty, as they were allowed to temporarily leave the premises of the RICs during the day however, their freedom of movement was restricted to the respective island” (2017, p. 18).

Within the hotspots, the following procedures take place upon border crossers’ arrival: Registration, identification, screening and debriefing by Frontex, Europol and the Greek authorities, health checks and vulnerability assessments by NGO staff, age assessment of unaccompanied minors by NGO medical staff or medical practitioners that work as part of the Greek National Healthcare System, the asylum procedures by European Asylum Support Office (hereafter EASO) and the Greek Asylum Service, coerced deportations or re-admissions of border crossers by the Greek Police, Coastguard and Frontex, and coerced returns by the IOM. In the following section I discuss the process of registration and identification which border crossers endure immediately after they arrive on Lesvos, the European frontier.

5.2 Identification and Screening

The process of registration, identification, screening and debriefing, are the first stages of a long and enduring procedure all border crossers are confronted with immediately after they reach Lesvos and the other Greek islands (i.e. Chios, Samos). Registration and identification includes fingerprinting, photographs, and screening, which is the determination of border crossers’ nationality and verification of identity process, shorting

and storing of the data. As *Efterpi*, a Frontex police officer, several times repeated during her interview, “It’s really important to know where migrants are coming from”. All the aforementioned procedures are conducted by Frontex, in collaboration with the Greek Coast guard and the Police, who although they are surveillance, repressive bodies, instead of performing tasks relevant to criminal law enforcement, mainly perform tasks which have to do with regulation. Thus, they are in David Graeber’s words, “bureaucrats with weapons” (2012, p. 72). Frontex’s main missions and tasks are to assist member states by providing support within the hotspots in the aforementioned procedures, as well as to fight organised cross-border crime and terrorism at the external borders in cooperation with Europol and Eurojust (FRONTEX, n.d.). Frontex’s role within the procedures would be auxiliary to the Greek authorities by providing them with technical and operational support. However, Frontex’s role was much more than auxiliary. Frontex played a crucial and leading role in the assessment, verification, and decision-making on the determination of border crossers’ nationality, while Greek authorities’ role was subordinate. Furthermore, Frontex’s power over the Greek authorities was evident by the fact that Frontex’s decisions were difficult to be challenged. As the Greek Council for Refugees notes,

(...) even though the Greek authorities may base their decision concerning the nationality of a newcomer exclusively on a Frontex assessment, documents issued by the latter are considered to be “non-paper” and thereby inaccessible to individuals. This renders the challenge of Frontex findings extremely difficult in practice (2017, p. 29).

This is very important considering the fact that many of my interviewees pointed out serious delays and mistakes in the registration, identification and determination/verification of nationality by Frontex and the Greek authorities. Katerina Rozakou in her ethnographic research on bureaucratic procedures on Lesbos observed a series of errors and omissions on the formal documentation produced by the Greek authorities during registration. According to Rozakou, “[documentations] were full of errors and inconsistencies; names were misspelled, families were filed under different surnames, years of birth were inaccurate, and even nationalities were mixed up” (2017, p. 38).

Although there is an accountability mechanism focusing on Frontex’s action, as the Danish Refugee Council notes this has not been put into effect. Specifically,

The regulation includes an accountability mechanism introducing complaints mechanism for allegations of breach of fundamental rights by any person directly affected by the

actions of Frontex staff. At time of writing there are no reports of this complaints mechanism being used in the hotspots (2017, p. 23).

As *Efterpi* noted border crossers “are rescued and welcomed” by the Greek coastguard or Frontex who transfer them to Moria hotspot in order for identification or screening procedures to take place. Both verbs “rescued” and “welcomed” note a self-representation of Frontex’s work as humanitarian and not repressive. According to Aas and Gundhus, this “shows a growing presence and prominence of human rights and humanitarian ideals in border policing practices” (2015, p. 1). However, this “humanitarian ideal” is oxymoronic due to the institutional violence manifested via border-related deaths directly linked with Frontex and Greek coastguard’s operations (Aas & Gundhus, 2015; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015, pp. 57–58). Also, academic research in other hotspots like Lampedusa has shown that identification procedures often take place with the use of violence (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). Forced fingerprinting is a systematic practice which is implemented by the Greek authorities and I have first-hand, lived experiences as an activist and former social worker at the detention centre of Pagani, wherein border crossers who were unwilling to be fingerprinted were physically abused or punished with prolonged detention for not “cooperating” with the Greek authorities (Iliadou, 2012). In this sense, the fact that border crossers are “rescued and welcomed”, which *Efterpi* emphasised, apart from cynicism is very much a matter of interpretation.

Immediately after arrival on Lesvos, screening and identification procedures take place within a container inside Moria hotspot. The process of screening includes an interview, the duration of which depends on the “collaboration” of the border crossers with Frontex staff. Screening takes only a few minutes as Frontex told me, but in cases when border crossers do not cooperate, the process can be interrupted and thus last longer. According to *Stefan*, another Frontex police officer,

We are trying to make assumptions of someone’s identity and nationality, since migrants do not obtain documents. In case they do, they do not always say who they are in order to help the Greek authorities to complete all the necessary procedures.

Apart from the identification or screening for the determination of the country of origin, Frontex staff detects “reliable” informants within the border crossers for debriefing. “Migrants are a source of information”, as *Stefan* said. Debriefing is a more in-depth interview during which the debriefer is trying to collect data on illicit routes, smuggling and trafficking networks and terrorism. According to *Stefan*,

If we understand that the migrant could give us more information to share with our intelligence in Frontex I will inform the “debriefers”. That’s what debriefers are doing. They are trying to understand the trajectories migrants are traversing, the routes they are taking, and all the information about the smugglers. Everything.

Moria hotspot is serving as a filtering mechanism at the moment of arrival with Frontex and the Greek authorities doing the sorting of border crossers into bureaucratic and legal “categories”, like “economic migrant”, “asylum seeker”, “deserving”, “non-deserving” and thus “deportable” and “non-deportable”, in the name of humanitarianism. As Polly Palister-Wilkins observes, humanitarianism has universal claims and is based on the idea of humanity as a whole (Pallister-Wilkins, 2015, p. 59). However, in the case of border practices and policing, the idea of humanity as a whole is challenged and as Didier Fassin argues, “oscillate[s] between sentiments of sympathy on the one hand and concern for order on the other, between a politics of pity and policies of control” (2005, pp. 365–366).

After screening, identification and debriefing, border crossers are moving to the second stage of a long and enduring process, that is the asylum procedures. In the following section, I will refer to the asylum procedures and the coerced choices, through the lens of social harm approach, border crossers are engaging with.

5.3 The Formal Options and Coerced Choices of International Protection

Due to the geographical restriction regime (Chapter 4), most of the border crossers I interviewed were trapped on Lesbos in limbo by being given specific formal options by the Greek authorities. As *Annie*, an aid worker of a well-known International Organisation argued,

We are trying to explain to people what their options are according to the EU legislation. Either they like it or not, these are the options they have. We cannot do something about it. It was their choice to leave and come here, so the options they are given are specific. What can we do? Not all deserve the refugee protection and the non-deserving must return to their countries.

Annie’s quote is very indicative of the standpoint which many International Organisations operating on Lesbos have towards border crossers. This view was often framed during the interviews with arguments like, “it was their choice to come”, as if fleeing poverty, violence, conflict and persecution can indeed be considered a choice in the first place.

What has become for me a lived experience is that an option and a choice is something very relevant (see Chapter 4); what for some (authorities, NGOs) is an option, for some others (border crossers) is a coerced choice (see also Chapter 4 and section below). By coerced choices I mean all the choices made by border crossers through direct or indirect extortion, and/or under the constant threat of deportation or re-admission. Similarly, to Chapter 4/Section 4.2.4, coerced choices are related to autonomy harms. All formal options provided by the Greek authorities are exclusively linked with the international protection, and thus they become coerced since if one does not apply for international protection is automatically excluded from relocation and family reunification system and also faces the danger of deportation or readmission. Furthermore, after being extorted to engage with one of the formal options border crossers find themselves abandoned in an enduring bureaucratic limbo which is incomprehensible, inconsistent, and chaotic with dysfunctional and inefficient procedures in all stages. The diagram below illustrates the coerced choices border crossers have. These will be analysed in the sections below by explaining how and why they entail the element of coercion. Furthermore, the concept of coerced choices is deployed here through the lens of social harm. In this respect, coerced choices consist of autonomy harms which do not allow border crossers to formulate autonomous choices, decisions and diminish the control over their lives (Section 4.2.4).

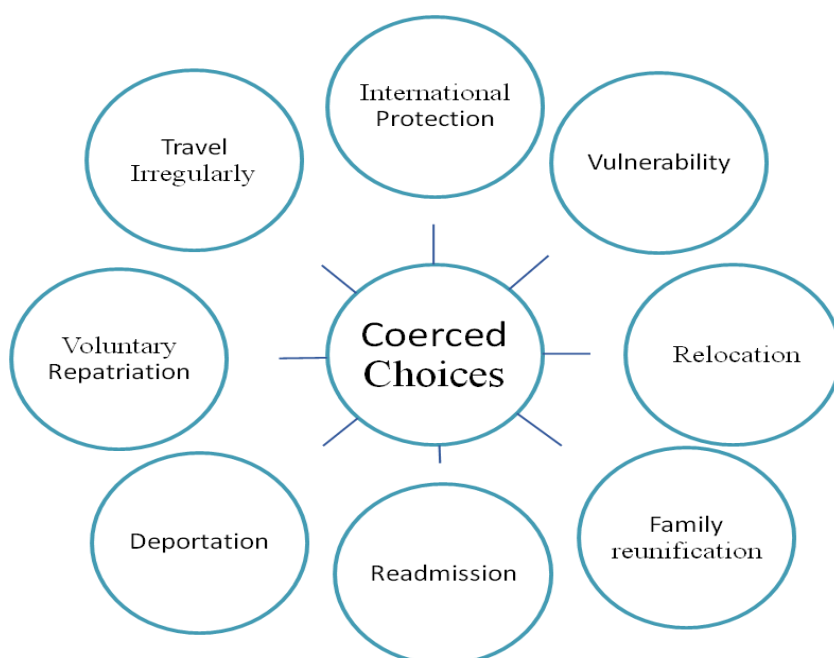


Figure 1: Border Crossers' Coerced Choices

5.3.1 International protection

The first coerced choice border crossers must make when they arrive on Lesbos is to apply for international protection. Border crossers are indirectly coerced to seek international protection from Greece, a country which is only *transit* for them and not their choice of final destination (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018, p. 8). They do so under the threat of prolonged detention in appalling living conditions (Section 5.5), followed by coerced deportations to the country of origin or readmission to Turkey based on: (i) the Safe Third Country or First Country of Asylum concepts (see Chapter 4) and; (ii) the Bilateral Readmission Protocol of 2002 between Turkey and Greece (Ministry of Citizen's Protection, 2018). Activists and NGOs like Amnesty International have criticised and raised serious concerns about the inadequate access to international protection, violations of the principle of non-refoulement and denial of dignified living conditions of border crossers in Turkey (Amnesty International, 2016c, p. 5). In Amnesty International's words, "contrary to what is required under EU and international law, Turkey does not provide effective protection to the asylum-seekers and refugees on its territory" (2016c, p. 5).

After being coerced to seek international protection, border crossers enter a maze-like procedural chaos surrounded by bureaucratic fences, symbolic borders, extreme delays, cancellations, inconsistency, inefficiency, and mainly frustration (see Sections below). The context surrounding the procedural maze-like chaos is better depicted through the Greek expression "without beginning, middle and end". In this respect, international protection - apart from being a coerced choice -often proves to be futile. As I will further explain below the limitations lie at the heart of the inadequate physical access to the asylum procedures, the limited access to information about international protection and the limited access to legal aid.

5.3.1.1 Restricted "Physical" Access to the Asylum Procedures

The "lodging" of the asylum application must be done by the applicant in person to the Asylum Service's office on Lesbos which is located inside Moria hotspot. The Asylum Service, EASO's office as well as the whole administrative and bureaucratic apparatus is located inside Moria hotspot, surrounded by material and symbolic walls and fences, surveillance cameras, the police, Frontex, the G4S private security and sometimes the army. If border crossers need to seek for international protection, renew their papers, schedule and/or complete the asylum interview, or be assessed as "vulnerable" (Section 5.3.6), they must walk in front of the armed riot police [MAT], who constantly guard the hotspot, go through the face-control and documentation checks by the police beneath the

gates, and then cross the threshold of the so-called Moria “camp”, which more resembles a prison than a refugee camp (Jauhiainen, 2017, p. 6). After one experiences the fear and intimidation of being repeatedly exposed to the various gazes of control then one must wait in long queues in order to lodge an application or even reach the asylum service and administration. The Asylum Service, as well as the whole administration section and even the NGOs’ offices, are located in a separate section surrounded by fences too. After observing from the inside and outside the carbuncle which is the Moria hotspot complex, I could not help but ask myself, how border crossers would dare to cross the threshold of the hotspot, in order to seek for international protection, without feeling terrified that they are going to be arrested, detained and mainly deported. By being inside prisons, the asylum service’s offices and administration operate as invisible symbolic, bureaucratic and material borders standing like obstacles on people’s way. This also connoted the chaos and the unbridgeable chasm between bureaucrats and border crossers; the former were feeling comfortable within these borders, whilst the latter were threatened and horrified by them.

Although, border crossers in previous years would normally renew their documentation every 6 months at the police department, when the Asylum Service in Greece was established (in 2013 see Chapter 3) all documentation renewal procedures changed. Documentation renewals are now taking place differently according to nationality criteria. For example, renewals for specific nationals who are considered as deportable like Pakistani people, take place each month at the Asylum service in Moria hotspot. This means that border crossers throughout the long asylum procedure, which can last from a few months until years, are coerced to regularly traverse the threshold of Moria hotspot and experience the horror of the intimidating gazes of control as well as the horror bred by the thought that entering Moria hotspot does not necessary mean exiting too. As *Imran*, an interviewee from Pakistan noted,

I want to renew my asylum card which expires in a few days, but I am just waiting outside Moria camp because I am afraid to go inside. Sometimes they put you in jail because they tell you that your procedure has failed. They arrest you, put you in jail and then they send you to Turkey.

In cases where border crossers’ asylum application is rejected in the first instance, the caseworker of the asylum service can trace it within the Asylum Service’s computer database and simultaneously inform the police, who arrest border crossers and detain them in order to readmit them or coercively deport them to Turkey. As *Simon*, working in an administrative position in the Asylum Service noted,

The Greek authorities have designed the whole system and process in such a way, so no one can escape. Refugees cannot leave the island and they are forced to come by themselves inside Moria in practice in order to be arrested [in case their application is rejected]. Otherwise the police would have to look for them somewhere in the [Greek] mainland in order to arrest them and deport them.

In this sense the Asylum Service, although consisting of case workers, administrative and not police staff, was serving as a punitive, persecution and repression apparatus by successfully playing the role of the cop. Furthermore, *contra* to the dominant image of an overall inconsistent, incomprehensible, maze-like and chaotic system, Simon's account capitalised the fact that when the system desires to, then it can indeed be very effective, functional, fast, consistent and with order. The dominant image of a system and processes full of inconsistency and chaos is meretricious but only to re-enforce the "bureaucratic deterrence", and to legitimise Greek authorities' inaction and impunity for its arbitrariness, violations, institutional violence and infliction of harm.

5.3.1.2 Restricted Access to Information

Border crossers have restricted access to information about international protection. Access to information means access to legal aid and assistance during the appeal stage, non-discrimination between border crossers on the basis of nationality, information about the procedures and the estimated time of waiting (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017, p. 114). However, restricted access to information is due to the inadequate interpretation services within the hotspots and police departments (*ibid.*). Additionally, due to the nationality-based assessment which was introduced with the hotspot approach, there is a discriminatory and racialised treatment taking place where certain nationals from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt are detained immediately after their arrival (Ministry of Interior, 2016). These nationalities are considered according to a Police Circular as "economic migrants" and thus are "deportable" (De Genova, 2013, p. 1181). Within the detention of Moria hotspot, the so-called "Section B", some border crossers are detained in practice because they have the misfortune to have the "wrong" nationality. As Nicola De Genova argues, "Deportable non-citizens are pervasively subjected to myriad conditions of social degradation, globally" (2013, p. 1180). From this angle, deportable border crossers in Section B of Moria hotspot have due to isolation restricted access to international protection, receive limited legal aid and social care, and have restricted access to information about the international protection procedures. As I found, even for some NGOs, deportable border crossers are not a "target group" and, thus, are disregarded. As Simon noted, "There are discriminations taking place, where NGOs overlook for example

Pakistanis. They only pay attention to nationalities with a refugee profile. All the others are just ignored.” Furthermore, due to the overcrowded facilities in Moria hotspot many of the deportable nationalities are also detained within the various police departments on the island, where NGOs and lawyers’ presence and access is not easy. As Médecins Sans Frontières note, “Residents have no idea when or how they will get out of here. Tomorrow they can receive a paper saying, ‘You will be deported’. Or they can be put in detention without any explanation without even a translator to explain to them what is going on” (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2018).

During fieldwork I experienced the disregard of deportable detainees in one instance when a lawyer working for a UK-based NGO who had just arrived on the island was asking me where she can find border crossers to speak with. When I suggested her to specifically search on the issue of detention of the “deportable” nationalities within “Section B” and the police departments, she said, “We are not concerned with the issue of detention”.

5.3.1.3 Restricted Access to Legal Aid

The provision of legal aid was also restricted, and variable both from site to site and according to the geographical region (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017). Although, there are many NGOs operating on Lesbos, in August 2017 cuts in EU funding for NGOs in Greece resulted in the reduced provision of services like legal aid. The limited provision of legal aid was prevalent as many activists like *Sarah* noted, “There is urgent need for lawyers here because refugees staying on Lesbos are many and their problems are overwhelming. The few lawyers who assist them are overloaded with work and in some degree burn out”. The urgent need for lawyers was something that I noticed myself since the first question I have been repeatedly asked during the everyday encounters with border crossers was, “Are you a lawyer?”

Furthermore, legal aid is mainly provided to border crossers who are in an appeal procedure. All the rest are obliged to navigate the system on their own, to consult a lawyer at their own cost and, as Greek Council for Refugee notes, to do so without sufficient information (2017, pp. 51–53, 114). Limited and inadequate access to legal aid was constantly the case in Greece and Lesbos. When I was working in Pagani from 2008 until 2010, there was only one lawyer for approximately 1500 detainees (see also Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013; Iliadou, 2012; Sarantidis, 2018b). This systematic practice is unfortunately becoming the norm for many border crossers in other EU countries like Germany, France, Sweden, Italy and the UK (for a detailed account on the access to legal aid in EU see ECRE/ELENA, 2017).

5.3.2 The Fast-track and (In)admissibility procedure

A central feature which was introduced by the Law 4375/2016 and which was directly linked with the EU-Turkey Statement was the establishment of an exceptional regime applicable within the border and asylum procedures in cases of emergency. The special border procedure which was enforced under the Article 60(4) L 4375/2016 was framed as a fast-track border procedure. The fast-track border procedure is a nationality-based approach and was introduced as an “extraordinary” and “temporary” measure for all border crossers arriving after the 20th of March 2016 (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016b). *Contra* to the already existing asylum procedures, the fast-track border procedure and the exceptional measures which entails, are activated in case of large numbers of border crossers arriving and lodging asylum applications at the borders. As an extraordinary and temporary measure, fast-track border procedure would initially be enforced for a maximum period of 6 months after the publication of the law (L 4375/2016) and would not take place after the 3rd of January 2017 (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016b). However, due to reforms which have been applied in June 2016 and August 2017 the *fast-track* procedure remains in force up to now. Thus, in practice, the “temporary” and “exceptional” fast-track border procedures are still applicable by turning the emergency from “exception”, in Michel Agier words, into an “endless emergency” (Agier 2011, p. 2), meaning a permanent, routinised and normalised condition. The fast-track procedure never worked as it was intended. The main bodies responsible for completing the whole asylum procedures (Asylum Service and EASO) were obliged through the fast-track procedures to make decisions on asylum claims within 25 days. However, as I found in practice the procedures could last from a few months to years. The fast-track border procedure includes the registration of the asylum applications with the involvement of the police and the army, the notification of decisions and other procedural documents, as well as the receipt of appeals by the Greek Police and the army. The fast-track border procedure is applied only to people who are subject to the EU-Turkey Statement and takes place within one of the six Receptions and Identification Centres (RIC) where hotspots are established (Fylakio in North Greece, Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros and Kos).

A central feature of the fast-track border procedure is the enforcement of (in)admissibility procedures and a differential nationality-based approach within the asylum procedure (Asylum Information Database, 2017, p. 60), according to which, as the Greek Council for Refugees argues,

The full registration and further examination of the [asylum] applications are prioritised on the basis of nationality where the authorities register and interview Syrian nationals first to assess whether their claims are admissible or whether they could be returned to Turkey, followed by applicants from countries with a relatively low recognition rate, such as Algeria or Pakistan to assess their claims on the merits (2016d, p. 33).

The concept of “inadmissibility” is related to the “safe third country” and “country of first asylum” concepts of the EU-Turkey Statement and shapes the legal basis for returning border crossers back to Turkey. However, neither the “safe third country” nor the “country of first asylum” concepts are found in the 1951 Geneva Convention. Instead, these notions are by-products of the EU’s exceptional policies on the asylum system. The (in)admissibility procedure is defined under Article (54) L 4375/2016, according to which an asylum application is considered as inadmissible when:

1. Another EU Member State has granted international protection status or has accepted responsibility under the Dublin Regulation;
2. The applicant comes from a “safe third country” or a “first country of asylum”;
3. The application is a subsequent application and no “new essential elements” have been presented;
4. A family member has submitted a separate application to the family application without justification for lodging a separate claim (AIDA 2016, p. 54).

Under the “inadmissibility” procedure border crossers who have applied for international protection are examined in order for an assessment to be made as to whether Turkey can be considered a “safe third country” or a “first country of asylum” (Greek Council for Refugees 2016, p. 77, 81). Those belonging to “vulnerable groups” and those falling under the Dublin III Regulation concerning family reunifications are exempted from these exceptional procedures (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017). However, even these procedures are complex and lengthy. As *Giannis*, a lawyer told me, “Without legal aid it is almost impossible for border crossers to complete the procedures by themselves”.

Greece has recently come under pressure from the European Commission to revoke even these exemptions so as to allow for their return to Turkey as well (Amnesty International, 2017a, p. 48; Sarantidis, 2018a). Between 2016 and 2018, approximately 1,657 border crossers have been re-admitted to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement (Amnesty International, 2017a, p. 17; Ministry of Citizen’s Protection, 2018). During the first months of the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, the so-called Greek Appeal Committees prevented the coerced returns of border crossers seeking international

protection from the Greek islands to Turkey (Amnesty International, 2017a, p. 48). According to Sarantidis, “They overturned the vast majority of the appealed first instance inadmissibility decisions of the Greek Asylum Service, by rejecting the notion that border crossers seeking for international protection can find effective international protection in Turkey” (Sarantidis, 2018, p. 4). However, the Greek Government, under pressure of the European Commission to speed up and increase returns on 16 June 2016 approved through the Greek Parliament an amendment of the aforementioned 4375 Law and changed the composition of the Appeals Committees (Amnesty International, 2017a, p. 14; Asylum Information Database, 2016; European Commission, 2016, p. 3,5). According to *Sophia*, a lawyer supporting border crossers,

Because of the fact that the first Appeal Committees were not rejecting the appeals but on the contrary they were accepting them. There were only two cases which were rejected. The Ministry was not happy with that and thus decided to change the composition of the Appeal Committees and assign them to Judges.

The new Committees started issuing decisions, all of which upheld the inadmissibility decisions of the Greek Asylum Service for applications falling under the EU-Turkey Statement. The (in)admissibility approach also noted the policy maker’s intention, in *Myrto*’s, a lawyer supporting border crossers, words, “to get rid of the nationalities that were falling within the readmission scheme”. From this perspective, *Myrto* argued that an asylum application was assessed as inadmissible even if a border crosser would have reported that s/he has been abused or pushed-back while being in Turkey. In *Myrto*’s words,

State’s policy is to reject almost all cases on the ground of being unfounded or inadmissible. Very often when a refugee was claiming that she was abused in Turkey and that she was pushed-back from Turkey to Syria, it was assessed that there was no danger for her to be readmitted back to Turkey and that she will be safe there. Thus, her asylum application was rejected.

Although, initially rejection on the grounds of inadmissibility was targeting Syrian border crossers as *Sophia* noted, all border crossers face the risk of being assessed as inadmissible irrespectively of their nationality,

Our advice to refugees is that ‘all of you, independently of your nationality, you are in danger because inadmissibility is applied to all and not only to Syrian refugees. Thus, you are in a state in which you are in danger. If you do not have any vulnerability, any medical

problem, any special psychiatric condition you are in danger and you must be very careful of what you are going to say about your living conditions in Turkey’.

Both the Asylum Service and the Appeals Committee are playing the role of the rejection and expulsion machine by indicating the wider politics of massive rejections, deportations, closed borders and deterrence which are enforced for the sake of Fortress Europe. As *Sophia*, and many more activist interviewees argued, “For me this demonstrates the political will for massive rejections. Basically, they wanted to establish an organisation in order to massively reject people.”

5.3.3 Relocation Scheme

Another coerced choice for border crossers is to apply for the Emergency Relocation Scheme (European Commission, 2017c). According to International Organisation of Migration, “Relocation is the transfer of border crossers who are in clear need of international protection from one EU Member State to another Member State where their asylum application will be examined once the relocation has taken place” (2017b). Although the European Commission had agreed to relocate 63,302 persons from Greece, the total number of people being relocated since 2015 is only 20,066 (European Commission, 2017c). Furthermore, there are certain eligibility criteria making access to Relocation impossible. According to the European Commission, eligible for relocation are “Nationalities with overall asylum recognition rate of 75% or higher in EU Member States. Currently: Eritrea, Syria, Yemen, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bhutan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates” (European Commission, 2017c). However, this eligibility restriction excludes many more border crossers who need international protection (UNHCR, 2017b). Thus, it is discriminatory and exclusionary also for the reason that the assessment should be individualised. Currently, there are 2,000 people in Greece eligible but in a state of waiting to be relocated within the camps and over 2,000 in the process of being eligible (European Commission, 2017c). As Amnesty International notes EU has failed to implement the relocation scheme by depriving from people in need of international protection one of the few formal options to find sanctuary within EU (Amnesty International, 2017b; The Independent, 2017a). And although the European Commission claims that 20,066 have been already been relocated from Greece, the NGO Action Aid notes that the process of relocation is so slow that, “At this pace, it will take the EU almost 15 years to relocate them” (2016, p. 15).

5.3.4 Family Reunification Scheme

Another coerced choice is the Family Reunification Scheme, which is also linked with the asylum procedures. Border crossers can apply for Family Reunification when they reach Lesbos. At the same time they must apply for international protection and wait until the Greek authorities complete the necessary procedures in order to be allowed to be reunited with their families in another EU country. It is a coerced choice because border crossers are coerced by the Greek authorities to engage with a stressful, lengthy, and slow but mainly impenetrable bureaucratic process, under the threat of deportation or re-admission. Although, Family Reunification as UNHCR notes, “is a fundamental aspect of bringing normality back to the lives of persons who have fled persecution or serious harm and have lost family during forced displacement” (2015a, p. 6), the process is very problematic and restrictive. It is based on a very narrow definition of “family” to such an extent that families are exposed to the “psychological and emotional harm” (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Tombs, 2019) of separation and waiting. As Action Aid argues,

(...) often parents cannot be reunited with their adult children. Siblings over 18 years of age are not provided with an opportunity to reunite, and family ties across generations are broken as asylum-seekers find themselves in different countries. This causes stress and grief amongst people who are already suffering the loss of their normal life as they have travelled across the world. It also breaks family ties and networks that are essential not only to the asylum-seekers themselves, but also to the societies in which they will eventually integrate (ActionAid, 2016).

Another serious problem related to the family reunification scheme is the lack of an appeal and legal mechanism in case a reunification application is rejected. An applicant cannot appeal in person in case of a rejection, and an appeal process is at the discretion of the Greek authorities. In practice this means that when applicants have their application for reunification being rejected, they have no legal means to appeal directly against this decision. According to Action Aid, “A long administrative legal procedure could be started in the country where they are located, but with uncertain results. Family reunification then can be postponed for years, or never take place at all” (*ibid.*, p.13). As a result, border crossers seeking to reunite with their family are trapped in an enduring bureaucratic limbo struggling with bureaucratic procedures which, as *Cleo*, a lawyer and activist who had supported many family reunification cases argues, “the procedures are so complicated and inconsistent that if refugees do not have a lawyer to do the bureaucratic procedures for them, then they will never be able to complete them by themselves.” When I was working

in Pagani detention centre I witnessed many cases of border crossers who were coerced to choose to travel irregularly again in order to be reunited with their families in another EU country since, as they were telling me, this way was faster and even easier than the family reunification scheme.

5.3.5 Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

Another formal option - and at the same time a coerced choice - is the Assisted Voluntary Return scheme. The International Organisation of Migration, which is the responsible international body performing the *voluntary* returns, argues that within its 40 years of operation it has “assisted” more than 400,000 people to voluntary return to their countries of origin “with dignity and safety” (International Organisation for Migration, n.d.). Between June 2016 and 9 July 2018, approximately 11,525 people have been returned from Greece (International Organisation for Migration, 2017c). One key feature of *voluntary* returns is that people are fully aware and willing to be returned (*ibid.*). However, as scholars have noted often voluntary returns take place by the use of violence and thus, as Andrijasevic and Walters argue, “when migrants make the decision to return under duress or as an alternative to state-enforced expulsions, ‘voluntary’ seems to designate an absence of viable options rather than a deliberate option” (Andrijasevic & Walters, 2010, p. 993; see also Khosravi 2018, p. 5). Border crossers on Lesbos and Greece might not be exposed to direct violence in order to “voluntary return”, but upon their arrival they are exposed to a “stealthy” (Li, 2009, p. 67) form of violence through an overwhelming slow, confusing and inconsistent bureaucracy, delays, postpones, enduring waiting and “stuckedness” for months and years (see Chapter 6). After the exhausting waiting they run out of patience, withdraw their asylum claim and request to voluntary return home. This is not an “option” being made freely, it is a coerced choice caused by the bureaucratic deterrence enforced by the determined policy makers to make border crossers’ lives unlivable. That is, the more border crossers suffer while entering into the bureaucratic chaotic and inconsistent procedures the more they will be deterred, withdraw their asylum applications and will be coerced to leave back “home”.

5.3.6 Vulnerability

As I will explain in this section, vulnerability is also a coerced choice for border crossers linked with the bureaucratic procedures and international protection. Vulnerability also, inflicts autonomy harms to border crossers as I will show. Although, vulnerability is not a new concept within the asylum procedures, in the aftermath of the geographical restriction regime (Section 4.3.2) it has received an overwhelming attention and application within the

bureaucratic procedures by EASO experts and the Asylum Service staff. Vulnerability is an assessment approach which is implemented at the same time and in relation to the asylum procedures, in order for vulnerable border crossers to be detected, assessed, prioritised and allowed to move from Lesbos to the Greek mainland. According to Article 14(8) L 4375/2016, which relates to reception and identification procedures, the following people are considered as vulnerable groups.

Unaccompanied minors; persons who have a disability or suffering from an incurable or serious illness; the elderly; women in pregnancy or having recently given birth; single parents with minor children; victims of torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence or exploitation; persons with a post-traumatic disorder, in particular survivors and relatives of victims of ship-wrecks; victims of human trafficking (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017, p. 78).

Vulnerability assessment must take place before border crossers apply for international protection. In order for border crossers to be assessed as vulnerable, they must go through a vulnerability screening. Screening, assessment and identification procedures were initially performed by medical and psychosocial staff of the NGOs Doctors of the World, PRAKSIS and Medin, but on mid-2017 onwards the responsibility was assigned to staff of the Ministry of Health and the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention (KEELPNO) (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017, p. 80). In practice, however, there were many problems related to the procedure as well as an overwhelming number of people waiting to be assessed as vulnerable. According to the Greek Council for Refugees,

due to considerable delays and at times dysfunctional identification processes, (...) gaps in the provision of services coupled with shortage in human resources led to a significant reduction in capacity to conduct vulnerability screening in the reception and identification procedure, as well as to provide out-patient consultations, a considerable number of border crossers (2017, p. 80).

As an outcome, not only vulnerability was inadequately assessed but additionally only persons with “evident” vulnerabilities were given the “option” of an assessment and, thus, care by the Greek authorities. The highly problematic nature of the administrative vulnerability assessment, however, was not only the lack of quality and the provisional gaps of the process, as the idea of the existence of a vulnerability assessment itself in the first place. Vulnerability is “universal and constant, inherent in the human condition” (Fineman, 2008; Peroni & Timmer, 2013). Also, all border crossers from the moment they are embedded into structurally violent procedures and living conditions (see Part II)

become vulnerable. As I witnessed, administrative vulnerability was not a tool of protection and inclusion, as the authorities were claiming, but was instead a tool of segregation, segmentation and exclusion. It was acknowledging that some people were more vulnerable than others, whose needs must be protected and safeguarded by a paternalistic state (Butler, Gambetti, & Sabsay, 2016). At the same time, the paternalistic state has the power to define who counts as vulnerable or not, to control the ways of protection and, at the same time, to victimise (Iliadou, 2017). In practice, however, due to the overwhelming numbers of people arriving and being stranded in Lesvos, vulnerability does not guarantee the protection of the vulnerable. Vulnerable people can be excluded from the administrative vulnerability scheme during the bureaucratic procedures, since among the *vulnerable* cases even “more” vulnerable cases are identified to whom a higher priority is given. A state of “vulnerability within vulnerability” is thus being enforced. According to Gilson, “(...) [vulnerability] characterises some and does not pertain to others, and this attribution is accompanied by a hierarchical ascription of value in terms of agency and other desirable capacities and traits” (2016, p. 74).

As I witnessed the process itself, was firstly resulting in the under-identification of all vulnerabilities in general, and particularly those not evident and visible. Secondly, instead of including on the contrary, as all kinds of bureaucratic assessments eventually do, it resulted in a systematic exclusion of those in need by producing divisions, binaries and hierarchies such as who is or who is not, who deserves or not, and who worths to count as vulnerable. In this sense administrative vulnerability assessment is an obscene, in Liisa Malkki words, “bureaucratized humanitarian intervention” (1996, p. 378). According to Malkki,

one important effect of the bureaucratized humanitarian interventions that are set in motion by large population displacements is to leach out the histories and the politics of specific refugees’ circumstances. Refugees stop being specific persons and become pure victims in general (...) (*ibid.*).

Through this lens the administrative vulnerability assessment pushes border crossers into the position of the “pure victim”, a state of being neither specific persons nor genuine refugees, but “vulnerable”, “bare humans” and lives, powerless, weak, dependant and subordinate.

Yusuf was a 60 years old border crosser from Syria who, the day we met, had an appointment for vulnerability screening inside Moria hotspot. As we were speaking he

opened his plastic bag and showed me his papers. He unfolded one of them and by pointing with his finger at a small box at the end of the document he told me with a strangled voice, “Do you see this? This is not good, not good at all. It says “NO”. This “NO” in this box is not good.” As I looked more carefully at his paper, I realised that he was pointing at a medical assessment. The box on the bottom of his document was referring to as vulnerability issue. Although Yusuf had heart problems according to the medical assessment, he was not vulnerable enough and thus he was assessed as non-vulnerable. “This is not good, not good at all”, Yusuf kept on saying, as vulnerability would have helped him to be recognised as a refugee. Vulnerability would also be his passport, which would allow him to travel to the mainland, by breaking free from the Prison Island. Vulnerable people are exempted from the geographical restriction regime and are allowed to travel to the Greek mainland. As *Katja* emphasised, “This ‘no’ and ‘yes’ has ‘killed’ people. There are even people who are forging the vulnerability assessment by replacing the ‘no’ with a ‘yes’. I believe that case workers can directly check if one is vulnerable through the system [a database], but many refugees are forging “no” to “yes”.”

The inadequate vulnerability screening in combination with the increased number of people who were waiting to be assessed, has been proved particularly problematic for survivors of torture, rape and trafficking. On the one hand, due to the aforementioned dysfunction and gaps and, on the other hand, due to the lack of supporting evidences, like the vulnerability assessment, which would validate one’s story, very serious vulnerabilities were under-identified and treated as undeserving of the protection of the international protection.

Single men are excluded from the procedure of vulnerability as non-vulnerable. The hegemonic discourse “associates vulnerability with femininity, weakness and dependency” (Gilson, 2016, p. 71), and dictates that (single) men are stronger. As a result, men do not enjoy equal treatment within Moria hotspot. They must endure longer queues in order to use the lavatories or to receive food (see Section 5.5). They are obliged to sleep inside summer tents in Moria hotspot’s yard or at the nearby Moria olive fields, even during winter and heavy snow, as if single men do not feel cold, get ill or die. In January 2017 three single men living in summer tents died within a week from hypothermia (Iliadou, 2017, 2018). Their lives had not counted as vulnerable, while their deaths had counted as random accidents. As a result of the inadequate vulnerability assessment procedure, there were various cases of people seeking international protection who were coerced to do

anything possible in order to be assessed as vulnerable and thus have a “better” treatment - for instance, to live in accommodation outside Moria hotspot or to have the opportunity to travel to the Greek mainland. *Petros*, a humanitarian worker for an NGO highlighted during his interview,

A woman who is raped, for example, *en route* to Europe and is now in a state of unwanted pregnancy, apart from the fact that it is very unlikely to speak to someone [inside Moria] it is also very unlikely that she will have abortion, since pregnancy is a ‘bonus’, a ‘ticket’ for being assessed as vulnerable.

As *Serafeim* an aid worker supporting survivors of torture sarcastically observed, “Vulnerability is the royal road which leads to the refugee status”, but which is paved, as I found, with massive misery, suffering and pain. What perverted minds would implement obscene policies and bureaucratic criteria like the administrative vulnerability by inflicting death to men and coercing women into unwanted pregnancies, even when these are an outcome of a rape?

5.3.7 Coerced Deportations

Coerced deportations are probably the only formal option that EU states so generously offer to border crossers. Deportations often take place with the excessive use of violence on behalf of state officials which in many instances can be proved fatal (Amnesty International, 2015b; Asylum Information Database, 2015; European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 2015; Fekete, 2003; Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 121). Resisting deportation is a very common reaction on behalf of border crossers who consider that their deportation back “home” or to another “safe” country equates to their death penalty (The Guardian, 2016). Resisting deportation fuels more violence by state officials and inflicts more harm and deaths (Fekete, 2003). Self inflicted harms are very common “despair harms” (see Section 5.5.4) on behalf of border crossers who prefer to die than to be deported to their countries of origin or to a third safe country (Deportation Monitoring Aegean, 2019). Deaths due to suicides and self harms count, as Weber and Pickering note, as border-related deaths (Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 143). In Lesvos deportations take place in a regular basis and border crossers are deported despite serious life threatening health conditions and/or disabilities (Detention Monitoring Aegean & Legal Centre Lesbos, 2018). The coerced deportation operations are not carried out in secrecy but are normalised by being executed in the public view and by producing a theatrical border spectacle (De Genova, 2013; Gillespie, 2018). Coerced deportation operations are the exemplar of what Nicola De Genova calls “waste removal”; that is to say, “a state’s

perfunctory and mundane act of ‘taking out the trash’” (in Khosravi 2018, p. 253). “Deportation”, as Khosravi argues, “by its nature involves force and coercion” (2018c, p. 33). Who in the first place wants to be deported back to a country from which she has fled persecution, war, violence, conflicts and destitution? Furthermore, who wants to “be expelled from one country but only to find her/himself an outcast in another” (Khosravi, 2018a, p. 2)? As academic research indicates border crossers after deportation often face situations of exclusion, precariousness, fear, anxiety and violence worse than the ones they were confronting prior to their initial departure (*ibid.*, p. 12). The deportation regime is a manifest of the obscene and cruel neoliberal system which aims to keep the underclass in an enduring state of precariousness, disposability and deportability. In this way the neoliberal political system keeps people trapped within an exploitative economic system as a cheap and consumable labour (Khosravi, 2018b, pp. 39–40).

5.3.8 Irregular travel

After living and waiting in limbo until they complete the multiple bureaucratic procedures, border crossers are eventually deterred and withdraw their asylum applications and they are indirectly coerced to continue their journey by following other irregular border crossroads from Lesvos and Greece to other European countries. Border crossers are coerced to address to the “local” smuggling and trafficking networks or to rely on, as Gillespie *et al.* have documented on their research report, “alternative, often unverified and unreliable sources of news and information circulated on social media, particularly by smugglers and handlers. This is endangering them and exacerbating an already dire situation” (Gillespie et al., 2016, p. 5). The smuggling and trafficking networks on Lesvos have rapidly proliferated; from individuals and ordinary citizens who “offer” a place within their vehicle, to state officials who turn a blind eye, and local shopkeepers who forge travel documentations (Alfavita, 2018; Ekathimerini, 2018; Greek Reporter, 2015; The Economist, 2016). The vicious circle of exploitation, violence and commodification (Chapter 4) of border crosser continues from Lesvos to the Greek mainland (Reuters, 2018; The Independent, 2017b), along the Balkan route (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2017), the Bosnian-Croatian border (Medium, 2018), Calais in France and the UK (FreedomUnited, 2017; The Independent, 2017c, 2018), in Ventimiglia at the French-Italian borders (OXFAM, 2018; The Guardian, 2018c).

5.4 Bureaucratic Deterrence and Social Harm

In this section I will mainly focus on the “obscene and grotesque” (Mbembe, 1992, p. 3) nature of bureaucratic asylum procedures. As I found, it was “the banal rituals” (Bourgois,

2009, p. 20; Gupta, 2012, p. 6; Kleinman, Das, & Lock, 1997, p. x) of bureaucratic procedures in all (in-between) stages and levels which were intensifying, if not producing in the first place, border crossers' suffering and pain. The violence and harms the procedures (bureaucracy) inflict upon border crossers are quiet and silent, but this is how structural violence is. According to Johan Galtung, "structural violence is a process with ups and downs" (Galtung, 1990, p. 294). The harms of the administrative and bureaucratic procedures border crossers experience are routinised and mundane (Cooper & Whyte, 2017, pp. 3, 23), silent and quiet, slow forms of violence that, in Gupta's words, "disappears from view and cannot be thematised as violence at all" (Gupta, 2012, p. 5). Below I will focus on the bureaucratic procedures, surrounding asylum and on their ultimate aim, which is to inflict harm and deter by making border crossers' lives unliveable. I will explain how the asylum "system", "procedures" and "structure" are violent by inflicting and perpetuating harm upon border crossers through chaos, uncertainty and inconsistency, disbelief and enduring waiting.

5.4.1 Uncertainty, Inconsistency, Disbelief and Enduring Waiting

The access to the asylum procedures formally includes the stages of registration and lodging of the application to the Asylum Service, as well as the interview process which is held by various low rank actors of EASO and the Greek Asylum Service. However, as simple as this may sound it is in reality a complex and Kafkaesque process which includes, in *Sophia's* words, an "enduring waiting, discomfort and 'sweat' [pain]", in order for a full registration to be accomplished, an asylum interview to be completed and a (final) decision on one's life to be made. The bureaucratic process can last months and years, with extended waiting between each stage of this procedure (Biehl, 2015, p. 58). Thus, the main problem surrounding the bureaucratic and asylum procedures is ironically the "procedures" per se and thus their very "structure" (Galtung, 1969, p. 175). The existence of complex administrative procedures at and within the borders echoes the state's anxiety over the governance and control of migration (Rozakou, 2017; Torpey, 2000). The governance of unwanted human mobility through bureaucracy has become a vital aspect of the European border regime (Rozakou, 2017, p. 39), where identification, documentation and registration practises are, in Rozakou's words, "considered regulatory and classificatory technologies. Numbers, documents, fingerprints, and photographs, among other modes, are essential technologies of state power" (*ibid.*). The bureaucratic asylum procedures on Lesbos in the aftermath of the hotspot approach are characterised by the operation of an asylum regime, meaning a complex hierarchical "structure", with different level of duties, responsibilities and multiple actors managing them, and a procedural

formality (Rozakou, 2017, p. 37). The Greek Asylum Service is the main body ruling with EASO's international staff experts assisting with the admissibility interviews (European Ombudsman, 2018).

The claims of a procedural formality was contradicted by the everyday reality and practice. According to Rozakou, "The ways a bureaucracy operates are embedded within broader cultural patterns of conduct and sociality" (2017, p. 39). More specifically, the bureaucratic procedures - in all their steps and in-between stages - were chaotic, inconsistent, confusing, multiple, and in many instances, fragmented, generating many more parallel procedures, sub-procedures within the procedures. In this regard, there were different asylum procedures implemented on the Greek mainland, different procedures in Evros region at the North Greek-Turkish borders and different procedures on the Eastern Aegean Islands, like Lesbos. There were different procedures for border crossers who arrived on Lesbos before the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement (the "regular asylum procedures"), and different procedures for those arriving after. The latter are truncated and framed as "fast-track" border procedures. There are different procedures which are implemented at border zones, like the airports and ports, and different procedures in detention centres and police departments. Furthermore, there is a different procedure - the so called old one - applicable for border crossers who have lodged an asylum application before the 7th of June 2013, and a parallel new procedure applicable for those who have lodged an asylum application after the 7th of June 2013 (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017, p. 6). The existence of different and parallel procedures and sub-procedures also meant a multitude of rules and regulations, obligations and prohibitions in an "if this, then that" logic (Antonakaki et al., 2016, p. 11). Within the procedural chaos, one must also add frequent amendments, which made caseworkers' mistakes unavoidable and the completion of bureaucratic procedures dependant on border crossers' luck. As *Hassan*, an Afghan border crosser argues, "asylum depends on refugee's chance". The element of chance mixed with the element of confusion and inconsistency are common ways of understanding and experiencing the overwhelming bureaucratisation in which border crossers were embedded (Griffiths, 2012, p. 8; Whyte, 2011, p. 19). And although, in theory bureaucracy in West states' is applied through a Weberian lens of rationality, efficiency, regulation and order (Herzfeld, 1992, p. 17), the bureaucratic procedures which border crossers must endure in practice are chaotic, incoherent, inefficient and inconsistent. This ritualistic, repeated, routinised, systematic, patterned (Herzfeld, 1992, p. 18) domination of the chaotic, maze-like and inconsistent bureaucratic procedures and sub-procedures shaped a context of "mundane surrealism" (Scheper-Hughes, 2004, p. 182) for border crossers. In her research

on border crossers in the UK, Melanie Griffith notes that the immigration system is incoherent and generates mistrust and confusion to border crossers, due to the frequent bureaucratic mistakes which can undermine border crossers rights and mainly harm them. In Griffith's words, "from their use of multiple names or dates of birth for one person within a single letter, to extremes such as confusing which individual has been deported or incorrectly bestowing refugee status" (Griffiths, 2012, p. 10).

As I witnessed on Lesbos, border crossers felt uncertain, confused and intimidated of being constantly exposed to the gaze of the Greek authorities both in a "panopticon" and a "myopticon" way (Whyte, 2011). The "myopticon" is a technology of power, controlling and knowing, which disciplines people not only through constant surveillance and visibility but through vagueness and distortion, through uncertainty and fear. Myopticon's main intention is to distort. The asylum and bureaucratic regime's procedures due to their inconsistency and chaotic nature confuse border crossers and distort their identities, reliability, personal histories of persecution and violence and expose them to further harm. Through inconsistency, uncertainty and vagueness – "the myopia" of the central gaze of control- border crossers' narratives are distorted, questioned and thus easily rejected as counterfeit. *Efterpi*, for instance, a Frontex's police officer responsible for the identification of border crossers, during her interview was repeatedly referring to them as "liars" (Biehl, 2015). *Efterpi* specifically argued,

Some migrants insist in their lie [during identification screening]. I had many cases of migrants claiming that they were Syrians, but the interpreter and I were sure [emphasis], that they were Algerians. "Are you sure you are Syrian?" I was repeatedly asking him and until the last minute he was replying, "yeah, yeah, I am Syrian". I finally registered him as Algerian, because he was Algerian for sure [she emphasises and slightly hits her hand on the table]!

Efterpi and the interpreter's opinion were valid, but border crossers' narratives were not. When the authorities observe border crossers through the various bureaucratic procedures they see "liars" and people lacking "credibility" (Biehl, 2015, p. 63). The disbelief of their credibility and honesty is a common feature border crossers experience when entering into the multiple and different bureaucratic procedures. Both identification and predominantly the asylum interviews demand consistency, both of the story and the grounds one claims when one seeks for international protection. Mistakes or inconsistencies in border crossers' stories, produced by anxiety, fear or by inadequate access to information about international protection, will negatively affect their credibility and thus their application

(Biehl, 2015). The increasing demand on assessments and evaluations by expertise during the various bureaucratic procedures and the production of supporting documentation proving the credibility and truth (Fassin & D'Halluin, 2005; Whyte, 2011) are illustrative examples of the institutional disbelief, misrecognition and devaluation of border crossers' experiences and voices. For instance, on Lesbos I witnessed the emergence of the "vulnerability screening assessment" (see Section 5.3.6). Border crossers who have not been assessed and certified through the "vulnerability screening" do not count as vulnerable and are excluded from protection. Another controversial example is the age assessment of unaccompanied minors. Border crossers must be assessed under specific medical and psychosocial procedures in order to be verified as "minors" otherwise they do not count as such. These assessments have been challenged as being unsuitable, lacking credibility and validity to verify and guarantee one's age (Feltz, 2015) and "vulnerability" (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017). The cruel irony is that border crossers can at any time be rejected as invalid, unreliable and non-credible due to procedures and assessments, which lack themselves reliability, validity and credibility. This is a central feature of the obscenity of policy makers who enforce non-reliable assessments in order to justify the politics of mass rejection, which are systematically being enforced at the expense of border crossers' lives. These intentional policies surrounding the asylum procedures are a form of bureaucratic violence, perpetuate and inflict more harm, since rejection often means deportation or readmission to harmful and life threatening conditions (Section 5.3.7). As *Samantha*, a lawyer and activist noted,

The violence of bureaucracy is one of the most dominant problems which we are facing here. I do not understand how and why the system operates like this. If the system was just corrupted or dysfunctional, I would find ways of supporting refugees by manoeuvring within the system. However, the problem is that the system is so inconsistent that I cannot manoeuvre within it. I constantly confront with multiple symbolic fences.

As I found on Lesbos, the bureaucratic procedures are intentionally maze-like, inconsistent and confusing so as, on the one hand, border crossers can enter them, but without being easily able to exit them. On the other hand, due to this inconsistency, uncertainty, confusion and chaos border crossers' advocates will not have enough time and room to (re)act. The procedural chaos and the bureaucratisation of the asylum procedures on Lesbos made navigation inside the system almost impossible. As a result of the inconsistent, multiple and parallel procedures border crossers become even more confused and dependant on lawyers and NGOs, since otherwise their navigation within the asylum procedures ends up being "a mission impossible". Inconsistency and chaos leave many

windows open for the authorities to manoeuvre and be arbitrary. However, the inconsistency and uncertainty being produced within the bureaucratic procedures, as Zachary Whyte argues, “is not so much an unfortunate by-product of determination procedures, as fundamental to the system’s functioning as a technology of power” (Whyte, 2011, p. 21 see also Griffiths 2012, p. 12). As such it is also part and parcel of the bureaucratic deterrence, which aims to make people suffer by making their lives unliveable to live and indirectly coerce them to withdraw their asylum application and return back from where they came from.

As Johan Galtung argues, “a violent structure leaves marks not only to the human body but also on the mind” (1969, p. 294). One of the most dominant forms of social harm which border crossers experience due to the bureaucratic procedures are psychological and emotional harms (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007). Due to the inconsistency and multitude of the bureaucratic procedures border crossers constantly feel uncertainty and fear. The long and slow procedures within all bureaucratic stages become exhausting and lead to the psychological and emotional extermination of people who must endure appalling and life threatening living conditions in/outside camps, and of course the threat of coerced deportation to their countries from where they were persecuted in the first place. As *Sophia*, a lawyer noted, “For me an investigation must be done at some point of how the psychology and the mental condition of people who live in camps has changed, in particular in the islands”.

The asylum and bureaucratic processes border crossers are embedded into upon the arrival on Lesbos are violent and harmful. Border crossers are exposed to psychological and mental, physical harms. As demonstrated earlier, the bureaucratic procedures surrounding the identification, registration, screening and asylum are lengthy, slow, inconsistent and dysfunctional. As a result, from the moment they are embedded into the system border crossers get stuck, and wait inside a bureaucratic and legal limbo (Cabot, 2012) – often for years. To the slow procedures one must add the systematic postponements and cancellations of appointments and asylum interviews without any prior notice, which push procedures back to the beginning. Almost all of the border crossers I have interviewed had experienced cancellations and postponements of their asylum interview not just once but multiple times, like *Mahdi*, an Iranian border crosser. *Mahdi* had to cross the threshold of Moria and the intimidating gazes of control seven times because his asylum interview was postponed, cancelled and rescheduled – and therefore had to experience fear, stress, hope, cancellation and hopelessness seven times. As *Mahdi* argues, “Seven times they have

changed the date of my interview. I should have completed my interview many months ago but they change, change, change. Seven times they changed the date. Seven times [he repeats].” In this sense navigation within the system and the bureaucratic procedures do not only picture Kafkaesque but Sisyphean too. Although, the range of emotional and psychological harm, which is inflicted upon border crossers while they navigate within the bureaucratic maze, is overwhelming and mundane, it is not perceived or thematised by them as violence. Furthermore, this form of violence is not only invisible, routinised and taken for granted but it is also tolerated (Gupta, 2012, p. 5; Scheper-Hughes, 2004, p. 177). “Something is better than nothing”, one of my interviewees commented on the chaos and inconsistency of the bureaucratic procedures. The bureaucratic responses which were enforced, in the aftermath of the refugee crisis, were aiming to establish order, fast, standardised and harmonised procedures in Greece with the other EU member states (Mountz, 2011b, pp. 384–385). However, as I found it was the bureaucratic responses which intensified the suffering of border crossers (Gupta, 2012, p. 6; Kleinman et al., 1997, p. x) mainly because, despite the overall inconsistency and chaos, the various actors and agents enforcing the bureaucracy remained “loyal to the image of an ideal-type bureaucracy” (Rozakou, 2017, p. 40).

PART II

5.5 Obscene Violence: Living Conditions, Social Harm and Structural Violence

Border crossers not only must endure the harms and violence of the bureaucratic and asylum procedures upon their arrival on Lesbos, but in order to adhere to these procedures are coerced to wait and live under harmful, humiliating, degrading and life-threatening conditions. This is a common practice exercised by the Greek authorities as part of the politics of deterrence. At the time of writing (August 2018), there are 9,694 border crossers who are trapped on Lesbos (Aegean Boat Report, 2018). Among them, approximately 7,500 people live in Moria hotspot, which operates as an open camp for some and a detention for some others; of these, approximately 100 people are detained within the hotspot’s detention centre (the so-called “Section B”) and 1,468 people are living in tents located in the allotments outside of the Moria hotspot (Pazianou, 2018). Approximately 1,200 people live inside Kara Tepe camp, which is coordinated by Lesbos Municipality, 100 people in PIKPA camp which is coordinated by volunteers and 750 people in various apartments and houses coordinated by UNHCR and various NGOs (Pazianou, 2018).

Although, I have collected an important set of data concerning the living conditions, enduring waiting, violence and multiple forms of harm in all the aforementioned sites, I will mainly focus on social harm and structural violence in Moria hotspot, since the vast majority of border crossers live there. I distinguish the harms inflicted upon border crossers, due to the structurally violent reception and living conditions, to the following multilayered types (see sections below). However, as Tombs notes, “these are analytical categories which, in the real world, overlap, are messy, and which can, therefore, be subject to intellectual contest” (Tombs, 2019).

5.5.1 Physical, Psychological and Emotional Harms

Border crossers on Lesbos are living in reception and living conditions which are humiliating, degrading, inhuman and life-threatening (Leete, 2017; Legal Centre Lesbos, 2017c, 2018). According to activists of Legal Centre Lesbos,

The current reception conditions in Lesbos are in abject violation of the provisions of the Recast Reception Conditions Directive 2013/33/EU, Recital 11 which demands “Standards for the reception of applicants that will suffice to ensure them a dignified standard of living”, and Article 17(2) which mandates: ‘Member States shall ensure that material reception conditions provide an adequate standard of living for applicants, which guarantees their subsistence and protects their physical and mental health. Member States shall ensure that that standard of living is met in the specific situation of vulnerable persons, in accordance with Article 21, as well as in relation to the situation of persons who are in detention’ (2017c).

The conditions within and around Moria camp have also been negatively criticised by various (I)NGOs. These reports refer to the degrading and humiliating conditions, poor infrastructures, lack of access to health care and medical services, under which border crossers are coerced to live for indefinite periods of time (Amnesty International, 2015a; European Court for Human Rights, 2014; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2014, 2017a). In May 2017 I interviewed *Kevin*, a border crosser from Ghana. He had been in Lesbos for more than six months with a pending asylum claim. Meanwhile, he was living inside Moria hotspot with the ability to move outside in the city and return back to sleep there. “The situation in Moria is beyond any imagination” *Kevin* was saying over and over again.

We live in an open camp but we see it as a prison, because we are always being controlled in everything we do by the police, the NGOs, and the people who work in Moria. And Moria is not a place for human beings to live. There is no good, proper accommodation, no

good health care, and no education for children, no good food, and no good sanitation. We are just living in between the bushes and the forest [Moria camp is in an isolated area].

The situation within Moria hotspot is so difficult by making everyday living an everyday suffering. In addition to the overcrowded facilities, border crossers interviewees noted the inadequate access to the lavatories and bathrooms. As most of them said, there were only a few lavatories and bathrooms for more than 9,000 people. They were filthy and thus unhygienic in such extent that border crossers preferred to go instead to the woods, like *Amir* from Iran. “I never use Moria’s lavatories or bathrooms. There is no water and it is very filthy. During summer I go to the ‘jungle’ [the woods] for toilet or bathing even if the water is cold”. Meanwhile, queuing for hours in order to use the facilities is an everyday reality. Border crossers are exposed to exhausting and enduring queuing not only for the identification, registration and asylum procedures but for almost everything in a daily basis. Long and lengthy queues was the norm; lengthy and long queues for the lavatories, the showers, the food and even long, enduring queues for receiving clothes. *Mustafa*, an Afghan border crosser, highlighted during interview that “there is a queue even for the food. The minimum you must wait is one hour to receive food. Everything here has to do with queuing.” This seemingly picture of order, which queuing connoted, proved to be an everyday lived experience of disorder and distress. As Megan Comfort (2008) and Javier Auyero (2011) observe one should pay attention to the general conditions and context in which the waiting and queuing takes place (Auyero, 2011, p. 11; Comfort, 2008). Moria hotspot is not the typical administration or welfare office. There is no any waiting room there. There are not even offices in general, just containers transformed into offices. There are no walls to lean, no chairs to sit, and all border crossers must endure the lengthy and long queuing and waiting standing outside in the cold weather and rain during winter or heat during summer. Enduring queuing under these conditions inflicts harm in the form of irritation, anger and discomfort to such an extent that border crossers queuing, run out of patience and fight with each other over the priority in the queue. And then the police intervene by exercising excessive violence. As *Mustafa* notes,

In the food queue how can old people stand so long? For one hour? They try to go in front in the line and the police catch them and beat them. Why you do this? He is an old man! How can he stand in the queue for an hour? And the police officer says, ‘This is not my problem, this is your problem. You must wait for one hour’.

Queuing is common and systematic practice states’ implement to the underclass and the more marginalised members of humanity. In this regard, waiting in queues is class

structured (Auyero, 2011; Khosravi, 2014). I saw that waiting and queuing under these degrading and humiliating conditions are dehumanising and consist of a dominant form of violence and harm. Photos from the inside of Moria hotspot are very indicative of the structurally violent living conditions under which border crossers are coerced to live and endure. Some of the most notorious pictures are those from the bathrooms and lavatories. They are filthy full of plastic bottles or buckets, because of the lack of the running water. According to *Kevin*,

Sometimes we have buckets in order to reserve water so if water does not flow from the pipe we use it. Sometimes the pipe will not flow water for a whole day. And the water for bathing is very very cold. Ever since we arrived in Moria there was snow and the water was very cold. So, most people were waiting for approximately one month without taking bath.

During winter in one of my visits to Moria hotspot I witnessed male border crossers bathing outside in the cold. Furthermore, the smell of urine and excrement was almost everywhere. Border crossers living in Moria hotspot are coerced to endure inappropriate housing, hygienic conditions, clothing, medical treatment and even food. “For how long one can bare to eat only rice or potatoes in a daily basis and within this filthy place?” *Khalid*, a border crosser from Syria, asked me.

Winter within Moria camp is an additional problem, which makes the lives of border crossers even harder (OPENTHEISLANDS, 2017). As Amnesty International, after a visit in Moria hotspot, noted, “As someone visiting the camps, it is difficult to get your head around the fact that actual human beings will spend even one night living like this, let alone weeks, months – even years” (Amnesty International, 2018a). Winter is cold and unbearable for border crossers who use and invent metaphors in order to illustrate the misery they are coerced to live within. “This is not an Island. It is the land of ice, an iceland. That is why I think it is very cold”, *Salif* remarked and by playing with words “iceland-island” indirectly commented the problem of winterization. As *Morteza* notes,

Each refugee is provided with two blankets and I think two blankets with this weather are not enough, especially when refugees sleep in summer tents. Even inside the house you cannot sleep with two blankets, how are we supposed to sleep in this cold inside the summer tents? In Moria it is colder than in Mytilene. We sleep in tents and there is not a heater [he mutters]. So, you are lying but you are not sleeping, because you are shivering 24h/day since there is no heater. If you want a heater you must buy it yourself, which is very expensive and we do not have money to buy it.

Inadequate protection against winter has been also proved fatal. Within only one week on January 2017 three border crossers men who were living in summer tents inside Moria hotspot died from hypothermia (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017d). According to the Legal Centre Lesbos,

When questioned about plans for ‘winterization’ of the camp for the approaching winter, a UNHCR representative responded that one solution would be increased returns to Turkey. Return to Turkey of border crossers violates the basic tenets of rights guaranteed to refugees and is clearly not a solution to the inhumane treatment that border crossers currently face in Lesbos (Legal Centre Lesbos, 2017c).

Border crossers not only must endure long queues for almost everything but they must also queue to see the doctor. And although there are various NGOs which provide medical treatment, access to medical treatment and health care is, as Médecins Sans Frontières argue restricted since border crossers might wait for up to six months to see a doctor within the hotspot (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017a). Doctors mainly distribute the same pill for all problems and pains, the “magic” pill as I name it; that is paracetamol. As *Mustafa* said,

If you want to go to the doctor you can go and there is also a queue there and they give you a paper. You might wait ten, fifteen minutes. If you have a serious health problem the doctor will give you the same medicine. If you have headache the doctor will you give a tablet. If you have stomach problem they will give you the same tablet. All they have is one tablet. For all the problems they give one tablet.

This systematic practice exercised by the medical staff within the camp is not something new. While I was working in Pagani detention centre, I had witnessed multiple cases of people waiting for hours in a queue just in order to be distributed paracetamol and even placebo pills which in reality were caramels. Furthermore, in cases of skin diseases the doctor did not distribute any treatment to relieve the symptoms but used to shout to people, “Hamam [Take a bath] my friend, hamam!” Practices like these were degrading and racist which undermined border crossers’ intelligence by belittling them as ignorant, dirty and uncivilised, incapable to tell the difference between placebo-caramels, paracetamol and other medicines.

In many instances border crossers must buy their medicines with their own money. If they do not have money they receive inadequate medical care. As *Sams* an Afghan border crosser argued, “Doctors do not have medicines for all people. For example I have a stomach problem and the doctor gave me only one tablet. This is not enough. The doctors

say ‘I do not have medicines to give you, you have a paper from me and so go to the pharmacy.’”The medical treatment of border crossers with mental health issues, alcohol and drug addiction within Moria hotspot and even outside is also appalling. According to Médecins Sans Frontières, “Between June and September, an average of six to seven new patients per week arrived at MSF’s clinic on Lesbos in acute need of mental health consultations following suicide attempts, incidents of self-harm, or psychotic episodes” (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017c). Due to the financial crisis and the off cuts within all sectors, as well as the overwhelming number of border crossers in Lesbos, the hospital and medical staff working there are not able to provide adequate medical and mental health consultation, treatment and follow-up to border crossers.

The mental health condition of border crossers with new or pre-existing mental health issues deteriorates to such an extent that Médecins Sans Frontières published a plea to the EU and Greek policy makers “to stop inflicting additional suffering on people who are already traumatised” (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017c). Border crossers have experienced multiple forms of violence and harms before they even reach Greece, in their countries of origin and en route to Europe (Canning, 2017) (see Chapter 4). Many have survived wars, bombings, death and massacres; they have witnessed deaths and killings of other people including their loved ones; many are survivors of torture, sexual violence, physical and psychological abuse. Children from war countries like Syria are confronted with brutal and outspoken violence to such an extent that, “A generation of Syrian children face psychological ruin and ever increasing danger, with child deaths soaring by 50% last year and the number of young soldiers tripling since 2015” (The Guardian, 2018a). UNICEF found that 2017 was the deadliest year of the war for Syrian children (UNICEF, 2018). Children on the move are at risk for additional multilayered forms of harm and violence (InfoMigrants, 2019; OXFAM, 2018) even in reception countries like Greece. The confinement and/or the coercion of being accommodated within facilities like Moria hotspot re-traumatises border crossers, exacerbating post-traumatic stress disorders or traumatising by exposing them to new harms including death. According to *Serafeim*, an aid worker supporting survivors of torture, “the range of harm and trauma one is experiencing within refugee camps and detention centres is enormous and worse in comparison to the violence one is experiencing outside camps like Moria.”

Reliving traumatic experiences by witnessing violence, abuse, deaths, and riots within the Moria hotspot inflicts more pain and delivers more psychological harms which are manifested via suicide attempts, self-harm, or psychotic episodes (Médecins Sans

Frontières, 2017b, 2017a). As *Maria*, a support worker of an International Organisation said,

Refugees who have been exposed to tortures when they hear people shouting [during riots or fighting] get upset and cannot calm down due to post-traumatic syndrome. The living conditions here [Moria hotspot] are not suitable for abused people or tortured, who have such a violent background and experience. Another problem is that refugees are already victims of violence from their home countries, whilst they are also exposed to violence while they wait in Turkey. Mainly women and LGBTQ people who are waiting and working in Turkey in order to gather money to pay the trafficker to travel to Greece are brutally abused.

These systematic structurally violent practices inflict and exacerbate the feeling of helplessness, precariousness and frustration to people with and even without having experiencing trauma. Whilst, they have also been proved fatal (Jersey Evening Post, 2017; Leete, 2017; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017d).

Structural violence, according to Johan Galtung, “is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realisations are below their potential realisations” (Galtung, 1969, p. 168) and “takes place when certain people are left to suffer in agonising circumstances that are normalised through the law” (Gilbert & Ponder, 2014, p. 1270). The structurally violent conditions and abandonment, which border crossers experience in Moria hotspot, cannot be justified. In the aftermath of the refugee crisis, EU has invested a great amount of funds for the humanitarian management of migration flow. As already discussed in Chapter 1, the humanitarian intervention in Lesvos is one of the most expensive humanitarian responses after the World War II. EU funds were invested in order for appropriate, dignified infrastructures and facilities for border crossers to be built within Moria hotspot. Despite this fact, as I witnessed, border crossers were left to suffer and even die in harmful and degrading reception and living conditions. The infliction of suffering and social harm upon border crossers is absolutely avoidable, and by echoing Galtung, when a condition which generates harm and pain “is objectively avoidable then violence is committed” (Galtung, 1969, p. 171). Such violence is considered to be structural because as Gupta notes, “it is impossible to identify a single actor who commits the violence. Instead the violence is impersonal, built into the structure of power” (Gupta, 2012, p. 20; see also Galtung, 1969, p. 171). Border crossers in Lesvos are left to suffer, as Davies *et al.* argue, “the brutal indignity of harmful spatial environments” (2017, p. 1270) such as these inside Moria hotspot. In this respect, structural violence is more quiet, silent and stealthy, where the everyday life within Moria hotspot is experienced as a war. As Paul

Farmer argues, “You get up in the morning and it is the fight for food and wood and water” (1996, p. 262).

5.5.2 Physical Harms, Degradation and Police Violence

Police very often exercise more subtle and brutal forms of violence. When they see border crossers fighting with each other in a queue they do not react, on the contrary they laugh. They amuse themselves at borders crossers’ expense. As *Mustafa* argues, “The police...I have seen them many times...they see refugees fighting and they just stay around for the amusement. Some others just stare at how we fight.” This is an everyday practice one encounters within camps on behalf of the police and gatekeepers and is not something new. I have experienced and witnessed these dehumanising practices, what Pierre Bourdieu would frame as “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1977, 1999), on behalf of the police, gatekeepers and even non-police staff since 2008, when I was working in Pagani detention centre (see also Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2013). In Pagani, police officers not only amused themselves at the expense of border crossers, they were even betting who would win during a fight. Due to the nature of the camp per se, which depersonalises and dehumanises people from persons to a faceless mass (Bauman, 2004, pp. 76–77), every time border crossers were fighting I could hear the police and even other employees belittling them by saying “These are not people. These are animals”. I will never forget a gatekeeper in Pagani who, on the very rare occasions when border crossers were allowed to walk for a few minutes in the yard, when he wanted to ask them to get into their cells he would not speak but would make the belittling sound “tsaprou” (τσαπού), which shepherds usually do to the sheep. The ultimate mockery, dehumanisation and animalisation of border crossers, which takes place through the anthropocentric hierarchical distinctions between human and animal species, is a condition one encounters within the borders (Haslam, 2006; Vaughan-Williams, 2015a, 2015b). Such dehumanisation and animalisation which takes place in practice, however, stands in radical contrast with the humanitarian enforcement logic, which places border crossers in the epicentre of its intervention (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 84). Dehumanisation and animalisation raise the important issue of who counts as a human and person in the context of the unauthorised border crossing. According to Zygmunt Bauman,

Inside the fences of the camp, they [refugees] are pulped into a faceless mass, having been denied access to the elementary amenities from which identities are drawn and the usual yarns of which identities are woven. Becoming a ‘refugee’ means to lose ‘the media on which social existence rests, that is a set of ordinary of things and persons that carry meanings-land, house, village, city, parents, possessions, jobs and other daily landmarks.

These creatures in drift and waiting have nothing but their ‘naked life’, whose continuation depends on humanitarian assistance’ (Agier 2002)” (2004, pp. 76–77).

Humiliation and verbal abuse by the police is an everyday form of violence and harm which takes place both inside the hotspot and outside of it. *Erfan*, a Pakistani border crosser, told me that, “the police all the time say “malakas” [asshole]. “Malakas” is a very famous word in Moria. All the time they say “malakas”. I do not know why.” Whilst, *Farhad* an Iraqi Kurdish interviewee, was constantly saying, “Police is bad, police is very bad.” According to *Thaleia* an activist supporting border crossers,

We have many testimonies for police violence, but from people who do not wish to proceed to an allegation. For example, there were incidents where some of the refugees in Moria camp were throwing stones. Some of them were arrested by the police. The police also arrested some others who were near the incident. Refugees said that when they were at the police station they were beaten a lot by the police, they were not allowed to sit down and were coerced to stand for hours. They were interrogated for many hours and police were slapping them.

Excessive abuse and police violence inside Moria hotspot has also been recorded by border crossers and activists (No Border Kitchen Lesbos, 2017). A very famous case of police violence is the case of Moria 35 (Joinda & Hansel, 2018; Legal Centre Lesbos, 2017b).

5.5.3 Sexual Harms

The atrocity of sexual abuse and violence in the form of assault and rape is not an unusual phenomenon nor new, but rather a part of “a continuum of violence” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004, p. 1) in time and space. Women, men, unaccompanied minors are often being raped multiple times, in the country of origin from border to border and from transit zone to transit zone (see Chapter 4), as well as within the so-called “safe havens”, en route to Europe and in Greece. In a recent study released by UNHCR for Syrian border crossers it is indicated that,

Sexual violence and torture of men and boys in Syria by multiple parties to the conflict may be far more widespread than previously thought. Those interviewed for the study provided shocking accounts of what they, or others known to them, had experienced. Reported forms of sexual violence included rape and mutilation of or shooting of genitals at point-blank range. Much of this was reported as occurring in detention or makeshift prisons. UNHCR researchers heard accounts of violence against boys as young as 10, and against men including those in their 80s (UNHCR, 2017a).

On October 2016, an unaccompanied minor boy detained under the “protective custody” of the state within Moria hotspot was raped by other minors within the section where minors were detained (Médecins du Monde, 2016). Although, there were gatekeepers on shift inside the section at the time that the incident took place, as well as carers from an NGO operating there, none of them heard or saw anything according to one of my interviewees. This incident, which is not an isolated one (UNHCR, 2015c, 2018c), also brings to the surface the issue of the harms associated with the systematic practice of prolonged detention of unaccompanied minors (Médecins du Monde, 2016). According to UNHCR,

Refugee and migrant children moving in Europe are at heightened risk of violence and abuse, including sexual violence, especially in overcrowded reception sites, or in many locations where refugees and migrants gather, such as parks, train stations, bus stations and roadsides. From testimony and reports we have received there have been instances of children engaging in survival sex to pay smugglers to continue their journey, either because they have run out of money, or because they have been robbed. Unaccompanied children can be particularly vulnerable as they lack the protection and care of an adult. They may also be placed in detention in some countries, including with adults, posing great risks to them (2018c, p. 1).

Rapes, sexual assault or the fear of sexual violence are very common within Moria hotspot. Women are afraid to use the lavatories during the night due to fear that they are going to be raped. According to Human Rights Watch report,

The women and girls interviewed described pervasive sexual harassment and a persistent sense of insecurity in Moria, and said authorities are unresponsive to their complaints and do not take adequate action to ensure their safety. One woman said she had been approached by a fellow asylum seeker asking for sex in exchange for money. Many said they do not feel safe moving around Moria alone and leave their shelters only in groups or accompanied by male relatives. A 17-year-old girl from Syria said: “Out of fear, I stay in the tent. I don’t go out (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

The fear and insecurity of a sexual assault is so enormous within Moria hotspot that even during the day women are afraid to use the bathrooms if they are unaccompanied from fear of being raped (UNHCR, 2018c). According to *Salif*,

if my [lady]friends want to go to the toilet I must go with them. I wait for them to finish and then we go back together. There are no lights. When lights are broken they are not immediately substituted. Thus, women have problem. These things can happen because there are so many people in the camps and you must expect to see unexpected situations taking place which normally would not.

Rapes do not take place only inside Moria hotspot but also within the Kara Tepe, a formal camp coordinated by the Municipality, which mainly hosts families and children. According to *Voula*, a volunteer in a local charity,

Rapes are also taking place in Kara Tepe. There was a case of a minor boy who was repeatedly raped by an adult refugee man living there, with the tolerance of the parents and the coordinator. The parents were afraid. The boy had to commit a suicide attempt in order for the coordinator to decide to do something about it.

Survival sex is another form of sexual violence which takes place within and outside Moria hotspot. Men, women and minors are coerced into prostitution in order to make money for living, to rent a room in a hotel, or to buy clothes and food. As a UNHCR spokesperson told me during her interview,

Sexual violence is a serious issue. Apart from the fact that there are many stories of women who were forced into sex in order to secure their journey here. You have cases where they are forced into survival sex, generally and after they have reached here [Greece], in order to improve their living standards, their life. Unaccompanied minors in Athens for instance do this [survival sex] in order to be able to spend some nights inside a house, take a proper bath, to sleep in a proper bed. All these are things that should have been secured, so as no one would be forced to do things like that.

Sexual harms within structurally violent and harmful spatial environments, like those of Moria hotspot or transit border zones along the way, and in refugee camps in Greece, Italy, Croatia, Hungary, Germany and the UK are endemic (Amnesty International, 2016a; Canning, 2017). The obscenity here is that these harms are absolutely avoidable.

5.5.4 Despair Harms

As contradictory as it may seem, “despair harms” are the ultimate form of resistance. Despair harms include harms like hunger strikes and starvation, self-harms and suicide attempts, in which people engage as a form of resistance, pressure, reaction and protest. I name these harms as despair harms because they might be non-violent acts against others, but they can cause harm and even death directly to the persons who perform them. Also, they might derive from *despair* but they also show resistance and agency (Section 4.1.5). Furthermore, *despair harms* also include violent actions like riots, damages and setting fires inside camps. These actions are; i) reactions of border crossers who are deprived of hope and dignity in Moria hotspot, by experiencing ultimate dehumanisation, degradation, animalisation and devaluation (Chapters 4 and 5); ii) reactions against the state violence

they have repeatedly been exposed to, the violent inaction and abandonment for months and years in inhuman, degrading and appalling living conditions. Violence in the forms of despair harms, as described above, is the last resort for border crossers in order for their voices to be heard. In one of my interviewee's words, "violence as a reaction to violence... violence against violence". Despair harms are an ultimate form of resistance.

Several sections of Moria hotspot, including the asylum service, which is "the most hateful office" as *Thaleia* a caseworker said, have been burnt several times by border crossers living there, causing even more delays and waiting to the already slow and lengthy procedures. "We have nothing else to lose anymore" *Salif* said, echoing many other border crossers living in Moria hotspot. The vast majority of border crossers I spoke with had lost everything, including their dignity. But foremost they had lost their hope. They were in an unbearable state of realising that, in Franz Kafka's words, "there is hope but not for us" (Kafka, 2007). Border crossers are excluded from hope and since there is no hope left for them, the gap hope's absence leaves is replaced with (outbursts of) anger. At the same time, hunger strikes are a frequent phenomenon which take place not only within Moria hotspot, but even in the public places and squares in Mytilene (Legal Centre Lesbos, 2017b), as acts of resistance and as the ultimate mean on behalf of border crossers to make themselves visible. Outbursts of anger and despair "fade away" with even more police violence and abuse (Legal Centre Lesbos, 2017a). As *Sophia* argued,

One aspect of the problem surrounding the asylum service is the state of waiting and precariousness. People wait for many hours outside [Moria] without knowing when and if they will manage to get registered. Many times some people did things, some actions which I would say they were manipulating actions. I would also call these actions, as actions of despair through self-harms. Also people who performed these actions the next days were arrested as delinquents, they were detained in the police station and they were transferred in other camps in Greece.

In January 2017, a border crosser from Egypt known as "Mohamed A.", whose application for international protection was rejected in first instance, was arbitrarily detained in order to be re-admitted to Turkey. As a demonstration of resistance and *despair* he started a hunger strike which lasted for more than 40 days. Activists in Lesvos and the Greek mainland took actions in order to express their solidarity and support to his struggle. Mohamad A.'s case is only one indicative example of the various aspects of the violence and harm which the politics of massive rejection, inadmissibility and deterrence inflict upon border crossers. According to Weber and Pickering,

If the act of suicide is regarded as being at the end point of a continuum of self-harm, then hunger strikes can be seen as a form of self-inflicted harm used for a range of purposes—most notably in these contexts as a way to achieve expedited resolution of their claims for asylum, to be released from detention or as reprieve from deportation (2011, p. 157).

5.5.5 Administrative Detention Harms

According to Article 46(1) L 4375/2016 “an asylum seeker shall not be detained on the sole reason of seeking international protection or having entered and/or stayed in the country irregularly”. Moreover, the use of detention of border crossers, according to Article 46(2) L 4375/2016, must be the last resort when alternative measures cannot be applied (Lymperopoulou & Rizakos, 2016). Furthermore, the national legislation (Article 22(3) L 3907/2011), entails a list of alternatives to detention including; “Regular reporting to the authorities and an obligation to reside at a specific area”, as well as “financial guarantee as an alternative to detention”. However, as the NGO Greek Council for Refugees notes, “alternatives to detention are not systematically applied in practice” (Greek Council For Refugees, 2016). The detention of border crossers seeking international protection in Lesvos varies. According to Greek Council for Refugees,

Applicants detained for (a) verification of identity or nationality; (b) establishment of elements of the claim, where there is a risk of absconding; or (c) for applying for asylum merely to frustrate or delay return proceedings, are initially kept in detention for a maximum period of 45 days. This can be extended by another 45 days if the Asylum Service recommendation on detention is not withdrawn; Applicants detained for (d) public order reasons or (e) pending a Dublin transfer can remain in detention for a maximum period of 3 months; Unaccompanied asylum seeking children can be detained “for the safe referral to appropriate accommodation facilities” for a period not exceeding 25 days. According to the provision in case of “to exceptional circumstances, such as the significant increase in arrivals of unaccompanied minors, and despite the reasonable efforts by competent authorities, it is not possible to provide for their safe referral to appropriate accommodation facilities”, detention may be prolonged for a further 20 days (Greek Council for Refugees, 2016a).

Border crossers seeking international protection in Lesvos can spend many days within Moria hotspot in order to go through the identification, registration procedures and seek for international protection in order to be provided with a police note which allows them to move outside Moria and within Lesvos but nowhere else (Chapter 6). The time within Moria is spent living in inhuman, humiliating, degrading and appalling conditions (see

previous section). The politics of systematic detention of border crossers, unaccompanied minors and other “vulnerable groups” in the aforementioned conditions is part and parcel of the politics of deterrence and is obscene violence. The politics of administrative detention - which includes various, layered, material and symbolic detentions and imprisonments - has become part of the everyday life of people. As *Christina*, an activist supporting border crossers noted, “camps have become normalised.” In the aftermath of the refugee crisis of 2015, the politics of administrative detention has been intensified by preserving the characteristics of the past (see Chapter 3). The whole Greek mainland has turned into a containment where multiple formal and makeshift camps have appeared and proliferated through the passage of time (Geohoros- National Technical Univeristy of Athens, 2017). New names have been invented for these sites (i.e. Hot Spots, Pre-removal Centres) but in fact this means more and multiple forms of “confinements”, “imprisonments” and “detentions”, both material and symbolic ones. Detention centres and pre-removal centres have multiplied and been fortified, whilst border crossers are detained within the mainland but mainly within the islands. Islands *per se* have become prisons, “Prison Islands” in which border crossers are trapped in symbolic prisons apart from the real ones in a state of precariousness and “limbos-ness”. Prison within prison and detention within detention shows the various forms of material and symbolic imprisonments which border crossers encounter (Chapter 7).

Conclusion

In this Chapter I referred to the reception, registration, identification and asylum procedures implemented upon arrival. I also referred to the overwhelming inconsistent, confusing, chaotic and maze-like bureaucratic procedures, which condemn border crossers in an enduring discomfort, uncertainty, waiting and bureaucratic limbo. I also focused on the structural violence and social harm, which the “processes” *per se* inflict upon border crossers, as they become trapped within them. Due to the range of harm and violence border crossers experience I called this violence as obscene, since it leads to the ultimate dehumanisation, degradation and depersonalisation of border crossers, assault of their dignity, and the negation of what it is to be “human”. Within the hotspot, the so-called safe zone and “safe haven”, the conditions described above also constitute deprivation and violations of the minimum standards one of the basic principals defined within the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The misery and harm analysed in this chapter, as Paul Farmer argues “need not involve bullets, knives or implements of torture, this misery has often eluded those seeking to identify violence and its victims” (Farmer, 2005, p. 8). The

infliction of harm, violence and human rights abuses due to the bureaucratic procedures and the harmful reception and living conditions inside “camps” are not random or accidents, contrariwise they are an outcome of political decisions.

In Chapter 6, I will focus on the range of harm and the concept of confinement beyond the camp and its institutional walls. I will focus on how spatial and temporal confinements beyond detention take place through the everyday practices of control, policing, law enforcement, discipline and violence by the Greek authorities -the police, the municipality, the local authorities- and even the local community. I will also refer to the border of time and the spatial and temporal confinements beyond the camp, within the island which in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction regime has turned into a “prison island”. I will argue that the protracted waiting which border crossers experience within the prison island is a deterrent strategy which aims to make people suffer. Thus, time and protracted waiting will be seen as a form of state violence.

CHAPTER 6

Spatial and Temporal Confinements Beyond the Camp: Stuckedness, Waiting and State Violence

In the previous chapter I focused on bureaucratic violence inflicted upon border crossers from the identification, registration and asylum procedures, by arguing that the inconsistent, chaotic and lengthy procedures are a slow violence which silently, quietly and softly kills border crossers. I also focused on the enduring waiting and confinement within the walls of Moria hotspot and the multiple forms of social harm and structural violence, inflicted upon border crossers while they wait there. I called this violence as “obscene” due to the range of humiliation, dehumanisation, degradation and deliberate harm which inflicts upon border crossers.

This chapter focuses on the interplay of two central and interlinked processes and deterrence enforcements; the “confinement beyond detention” (Mountz, 2012; Tazzioli, 2017; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018) and “the violence of stuckedness and waiting” (Iliadou 2018). The first process focuses on the everyday strategies and technologies of regulation, confinement, social control, discipline, and harm outside of the Moria hotspot inside Lesvos Island, which since 2016 (see Chapters 4 and 5) has been transformed into a Prison Island; a spatial, temporal and existential confinement, where instead of walls and iron bars there is the deep blue sea. The second process is related to the lived and embodied experience of time, enduring waiting, and “stuckedness” (Hage, 2009a) within the spatial confinement, in Lesvos. Here I will focus on the spatial and temporal confinements -the “borders of time” or “temporal borders” (Agier, 2013, p. 29) - which confine border crossers’ lives beyond the camp and detention, in Lesvos, by exposing them to multiple forms of harm and violence. As I witnessed border crossers are being locked up within the “borders of time” (Agier, 2013, p. 29), which are characterised from enduring waiting, stuckedness, “existential immobility” (Hage, 2009a, 2009b) and existential inertia which is torturous and mentally exhausting. This is a deliberate harm infliction and is a form of state violence. Stuckedness, time and waiting, is a “border technique” (Mezzadra & Neilson,

2013) and part of the temporal border controls (Andersson, 2014b; Tazzioli, 2018) which are enforced in order to govern, discipline, regulate the undesirables by making their lives unliveable and by making them wait, suffer and endure until they are mentally and physically exhausted and deterred of staying or moving further to Europe (Iliadou 2017, 2018). I call this stealthy and obscene form of state violence related to stuckedness, time and waiting as the violence of stuckedness and waiting (*ibid.*).

Vignette: The Border of Time

On May 2008 I traversed for the first time the threshold of Pagani detention. The site was surrounded by abandoned allotments and in a sense was concealed behind a big industrial building. If one was not aware about the existence and the exact location of this site, it would be very difficult for one either to see it or to find it. The “reception” centre was located in a former abandoned warehouse in an isolated industrial zone, 4 km away from the city centre. In reality it was out of sight and out of mind or, as I experienced it, *in nowhere* (Iliadou 2012). Iron fences were surrounding Pagani’s perimeter, whilst the two main gates were sealed with a simple lock, manifesting the irony of the presence but in practice absence of a strict surveillance and security of the camp. Detainees’ rooms were cells which resembled to cages. The disorder and messiness were prevailing all over the place within Pagani. The yard was full of litters and an awful smell was emanated from the overloaded litter bins. Homeless cats and dogs used to find sanctuary either inside the cages-cells or outside in the yard with the hope to grab food from the litter bins. A few steps away, there were two neighboring containers, the police and medical staff’s office, which were separated the one from the other from a tall iron fence. On this tall fence, which as a border was enveloping police’s office, a handwritten note was disposed warning the pariahs (NGO workers and border crossers) that “the entry is prohibited to all non-police staff”. Apart from the detainees, who felt deep into their hearts both the borders and confinement, by being encircled from so many visible and symbolic borders, iron fences and bars, locks, surveillance cameras, restrictions, prohibitions and police officers I was feeling as if I was under suspicion, confined and constantly watched too (Iliadou, 2012). The scenes described above was for me an enduring lived experience of the symbolic borders which were breathing within the spatial ones, what I have called as “borders within the borders” (Iliadou, 2012). My embodied experience of the visible and symbolic borders, mainly expressed through confusion, fear and stress, is so intense which still invokes every time I face a fence even when this fence happens to surround a chicken coop.

Detention centres on islands for those who arrive without having documents, passports and visas are odd places. They have the attribute of “abnormality” as far as the space and time they occupy; they are always at the margins of time and space. As Michel Agier notes, “the border is spatial, the boundary has a form that partitions space and materialises an inside and outside” (Agier 2013, p. 19). The space border crossers occupy after their arrival is at the margins of the state and it is an interval and liminal border space, which role is to keep them for as long as it is necessary inside but at the same outside, locked-out of the state (Agier, 2013; Mountz, 2011a, p. 121). However, on that May of 2008, not only did I traverse the spatial border -that of Pagani “reception” centre- but I also entered an odd space affected by time and which, at the same time, looked forgotten and abandoned from time. It was that moment that the temporal border suddenly emerged in front of my very eyes as being closely tied into the spatial one, a state which is aptly reflected through the concept “border time” (Agier, 2013, p. 29). *Contra* to the normal industrial time, border time, was different, odd, abnormal, and heavy and mainly interval, which similarly to the spatial borders (see Chapter 4), it was producing thresholds of liminality (Mountz, 2011b) by coercing border crossers to exist as liminal existences (Agier 2013, p. 35). Thus, an intense first- hand lived experience related to confinement was for me from the very first moment its temporal aspect (Iliadou, 2012).

Border time within Pagani detention was often framed by border crossers as the “prison time”. In this way they were noting with the more emphatic way the bond between spatial and temporal borders, and thus the existence of the temporal confinement. Border and prison time was full of uncertainty and enduring waiting. No one really knew why and what for one was (a)waiting for. As Agier argues,

The social and non-natural character of the border ends up creating a particular situation: the uncertainty of its drawing is expressed in time- of waiting, reflection, conflict- and in space- vague, as if the border was the place where uncertainty had found its most exact recognition. (2017, p. 23)

Dealing with time and waiting and the “formidable beast of monotony” (Griffiths, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013) was tough. Boredom, physical and social isolation were the main issues that border crossers were coping with while they were waiting, by also experiencing the sense of losing the sense of time due to isolation of living in the interval time of the border. “What day is today? Which month? Which year? What time is it?” These were the most frequently asked questions inside there since there were no calendars, no clocks, no mobile phones so as border crossers could be oriented in respect to time. Border and prison

time was partitioned into peculiar time zones related to certain repeated, controlled, institutional organised and ritualistic activities; for instance, the daily distribution of breakfast, lunch and dinner. In this way, as Sarah Turnbull also observes, border crossers were trying “to impose a sense of order” (Turnbull, 2016, p. 68) to the general disorder the border time was producing. Border crossers in Pagani were not allowed to exit their cells and walk in the yard although they had the right to do so. In this way they were not able to have any physical and social activity outside of the overcrowded cells. In one of the three levels of Pagani’s yard I remember that there was just one football net which nobody ever used, since no one could have access to it. Apart from the lack of any physical and social activity border crossers were not allowed to have their mobile phones for as long their confinement would last. During their arrest by the police, mobile phones were removed and as a result, border crossers who were isolated and deprived from any kind of communication with the “outside” world. Everyday news and news from home could not reach them, since there were no mobile phones and also not any access to Wi-Fi. The Greek authorities were not allowing me to bring them newspapers because as they said border crossers would read sad news from home which might upset them. Border crossers without having their phones could not contact their families back home to let them know that they reached Europe alive. Very often their mobiles were lost or stolen due to the inconsistent and dysfunctional system police was applying when detaining border crossers in Pagani. They literally used to throw all mobiles within a plastic bag and stored them somewhere in their office. Lost mobile devices meant lost contact details of family members, friends, middle persons and smugglers back home, in Greece and also in the next transit countries (Gillespie et al., 2016). Losing their mobiles or not having access to them was a shocking experience for most of the border crossers who were literally left locked out of the rest of the world. The only phones in Pagani were four telephone booths which, however, were located outside of the cells and border crossers could not have access to them since they were not allowed to exit their cells. When border crossers were given the opportunity to get out of the cell and make a phone call, they would realise that all phones were broken. If one was lucky enough and the phones were operating, one could make the phone call by using a telephone card which could only buy with her/his own pocket money (if s/he had) from the market. It was really a double shock for border crossers when they would also realise that there was not any single market to buy the telephone card, neither inside Pagani but nor outside, within 4km distance range.

For the aforementioned reasons, after traversing the threshold of Pagani border crossers were at the same time traversing and getting “stuck” within an interval border time, a

temporal limbo, with a main symptom the feeling of boredom and inertia. That is why many border crossers were inventing ways and games to escape even for a while from this odd time. One of the games they were playing inside the cells was volley ball, but in lack of a real volley ball border crossers were making their own by filling old pillows with clothes and socks or by filling damaged balls with clothes, old bed sheets or towels. Others due to boredom used to open holes to the neighboring cells and were permeating from cell to cell without being noticed by the police. Furthermore, border crossers used to draw, write poems, make graffiti out from toothpaste on the walls, while they used to throw used tea sachets which got stuck on the ceiling and were disposed there by formulating an odd décor. These were their way to manage boredom and inertial time. This odd time caused psychological and emotional harms to border crossers in the form of nervousness, anxiety and anger. Border time itself was also experienced as a cruel punishment and torture. It was like somebody had put their lives on an endless hold. Many border crossers due to enduring waiting, anxiety and despair were harming themselves by hitting their heads against the iron bars and the walls until they bleed, or they were cutting themselves. Some others were fighting with each other. Fighting was another way to “kill” their time there and manage boredom, as border crossers used to say. Border and prison time was a slow and inertial time (Griffiths, 2014; Turnbull, 2016, p. 68), for which border crossers used to say that its slow pace made their hair grey and themselves to ultimately grow old only within 24hours (see also Khosravi, 2017, p. 82). The experience of time within border zones it is one of embodiment. Border or prison time was an embodied experience expressed for instance through the illusion of the abnormal ageing process. Border crossers found themselves, trapped inside the time of the border by being coerced to live the same day over and over again. As many of the border crossers confined there used to say “here we see all the time the same things. The same people passing by, talking to us, the same flag waving, the same church...everyday is exactly the same” (Iliadou, 2012).

6.1 Spatial Confinements, Racist Violence and Panoptical

Surveillance: The Prison Island

Beyond the hotspots, detentions and camps, the police department cells, the barbed wires, the iron bars and images of people with handcuffs, the confinement and immobilisation of border crossers expands and diffuses within borders and borderlands, transit stations and buffer zones, stripes of lands and islands. The spatial and temporal borders do not only exist within the closed settings of detention centres, hotspot and camps but they are expanded and diffused beyond the institutional walls and fences by inflicting additional

harms upon border crossers; more subtle, stealthy and obscene ones. This section is about the various forms of policing, social control and enforcement “in the intimate and mundane spaces of the daily life” (Mountz, 2012, p. 83).

In Greece, islands have a long history in functioning as spatial confinements, as some of them have been used in the past as quarantine zones and isolation, displacement and confinement of the undesirables; the lepers (Spinalonga Island), the mentally ill (Leros island), and the exiled leftists from the dictatorship of colonel Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941) (Gavdos, Anafi, Karpathos, Leros and Lesvos) (Avramopoulou, 2018; Christopoulos, 2018; Wolfe, 2017). Some of these islands continued to operate as prisons during the dictatorship, between 1967 and 1974. The islands of then were used for the isolation and containment of those who were considered dangerous for polluting or intoxicating the population with their illness or political beliefs (*ibid.*). Islands have systematically been used as spaces of control, isolation, dispersal, containment, deportation and management of the undesirable border crossers sometimes under ambiguous jurisdiction in the USA (Ellis island (1891-1924), Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Guam and Tinian), in Canada and Australia (Nauru and Christmas Island) (Mountz, 2011b, 2012), in Malta, Italy (Lampedusa), and Greece (Leros, Lesvos, Samos, Chios Islands). Denmark also announced plans for confining “rejected asylum seekers and migrants” away from its territory (Lindholm Island) (Selsoe Sorensen, 2018). The politics of deterrence, as Alison Mountz observes, often involves detention, isolation and containment on islands, so as border crossers would be deterred from reaching a sovereign territory and seek international protection (Mountz, 2011b). In the sites or islands-in-between, border crossers often experience a spatial confinement, protracted stuckness, isolation and uncertainty. They often struggle without knowing which state’s captives they are. When I was working in Pagani detention centre I was frequently asked by border crossers, “Is this Italy?” Islands, as Mountz observes, are “difficult for activists and refugee lawyers to locate, detainees to escape and researchers to study” (Mountz, 2011b, p. 382), they are in-between places and consist of thresholds of liminality. Lesvos Island is undoubtedly a Greek island. However, the overwhelming border, the bureaucratic and deportation regime, which has been proliferated and enforced in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis, with multiple international and EU bodies and actors (Chapters 1, 4 and 5) leading and adjudicating the various processes with the Greek authorities holding a subordinate role, produces in practice a juridical and sovereign territorial ambiguity by turning Lesvos into a liminal threshold (see also Section 4.2). In this respect, Lesvos as a threshold plays a crucial role in the enforcement of the politics of deterrence since there border crossers’

rights are suspended or violated, the autonomy of their movement is restricted, they experience multiple states of limbo, and multiple forms of harm and violence even from the local population (see below). Apart from their physical confinement, border crossers also experience the confinement of their desire and dream to settle in another place (Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018, p. 3). Prison Islands like Lesbos, for unauthorised border crossers, manifest the enforcement of spaces and regimes –an “architecture or archipelago of exclusion”- where people are denied, excluded or minimally given access to rights, care and international protection (Mountz, 2011b, p. 383). According to Mountz, “the architecture of exclusionary enforcement captures bodies in trajectories between states: holding people in an open detention facility on an island, where they are suspended in time and space, neither returned home nor allowed to reach their destination” (*ibid.*).

Contra to the systematic deterrence practices of keeping border crossers locked out (Agier, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018), at the margins of the nation state, in the post-refugee crisis era border crossers are also locked up on islands between states and even within EU but in the periphery. The metaphor of Lesbos as the “Prison Island” which border crossers use, is the ultimate manifestation of the spatial and temporal confinement and limbo beyond detention (Iliadou, 2017). Despite the political visibility and media attention, which the Moria hotspot has attracted through the passage of time as a detention centre for 10.192 border crossers (Aegean Boat Report, 2018), in reality it is an open site for some, a residency for overnight for some others and a closed detention for only a few (Chapter 5). According to the statistical data of the Ministry of Interior among the 10,192 border crossers, who are currently on Lesbos, 7, 995 stay in Moria hotspot and 137 out of them are detained inside the closed detention facilities (the so-called Section B), the 620 border crossers live in apartments which are coordinated by the UNHCR, 164 in apartments which are coordinated by the state, and 83 in apartments which are coordinated by NGO’s (Ministry of Interior, 2018). Apart from the 137 detainees including the unaccompanied minors, who are not allowed to move outside the premises of Moria hotspot, all the rest are authorised to move within Lesbos and outside Moria hotspot by possessing an official document produced by the Greek authorities. The official document is commonly called, by border crossers, volunteers and practitioners within their everyday transactions and practices, as the “Mytilene paper”. The “Mytilene paper” is parallel to other official legal documents and, as Yael Navaro-Yashin argues, “appear[s] peculiar to anyone not acculturated to this state practice and seems normal or familiar to those who are its subjects and live under its sphere of influence” (Navaro-Yashin, 2007, p. 85). The “Mytilene paper” technically plays the role of the identity card and passport. In reality, it does not authorise people to cross the

border controls, the borders and travel from Lesbos to the mainland and elsewhere, since it is not recognised and legitimised as an official document outside of the island. This paper, as Navaro-Yashin argues, is “both real and unreal, present and absent, (...) [it] exist[s] and there is an administrative practice in place that requires [it] but still [it is] not recognised” (Navaro-Yashin, 2007, p. 80). It is also a residency restriction which defines, whether or not border crossers are obliged to overnight in Moria hotspot, Kara Tepe camp or to another formal site and accommodation. As *Sophia* told me,

The paper is named as “the Mytilene paper”, which you can use in order to go to Mytilene and go out from Moria camp. But the paper contains a residency restriction; if you are a family you must stay in Moria or Kara Tepe and if you are a single man you must stay in Moria. Hence, you are restricted in sleeping inside Moria.

Although, outside of the detention and the walls of Moria hotspot the vast majority of border crossers, who regularly move back and forward from the various sites to the city centre, are adrift to the intimidating gazes of control through stop and search practices and *sweep* operations. Although, almost all of border crossers obtain the “Mytilene paper” and have the right to freely move within the prison island, however they are repeatedly stopped, controlled, arrested and intimidated during these operations. Border crossers’ spatial and temporal confinement beyond the camp on the island takes place through an “enforcement archipelagos” (Mountz, 2011a) of everyday practices and technologies of governance, enforcement, panoptical surveillance, discipline, illegalisation, violence and abandonment. On May 2017, during my last field trip to Lesbos *Sams*, an Afghan border crosser who has lived in Lesbos over the past six years and in Greece for more than a decade was stopped, searched and arrested by the Port Police while he was taking a night walk around the port. Although, he demonstrated his refugee card to the authorities, the Port Police officers arrested him, detained him in a container for many hours and then released him, without any further explanations.

I was just walking around the Port and I was arrested! They detained me for several hours in a container within the port. At some point a port police officer came to see me and said, “You should be aware that we are looking for them [border crossers]”. They are doing street patrols with cars and every time they spot refugees, because refugees are visible, they look like refugees, they arrest them, detain them and after some hours they let them go on foot. They are doing it frequently you know. They just stop refugees in the streets and they arrest them [he repeats].

“Since when walking during night is illegal?” he kept on saying, frustrated by the fact that either with or without “papers” all border crossers and their “papers” are treated by the authorities with disbelief, suspiciously, as non-genuine, and illegal (Haas 2017; Fassin and d’Halluin 2007). The humiliation, intimidation and institutional violence beyond the camp through stop and search practices and sweep operations in the everyday life on behalf of the Greek authorities is not something new and it is not an isolated incident (Amnesty International, 2012b; Papanicolaou & Papageorgiou, 2016b; Racist Violence Recording Network, 2016; Vasilaki, 2016). On 2014, *Safar* a border crosser from Afghanistan in Mytilene harbor, similarly to *Sams*, was confronted with the suspicious border. *Safar*’s story begins in 2006 when he arrived to Greece as an unaccompanied minor and sought for international protection. He was waiting in limbo for up to 6 years and, without being able to wait more, he left irregularly from Lesvos to Germany to seek for international protection there. After some months he was granted the refugee status. During 2014 he decided to travel to Lesvos, as a tourist this time, to visit his friends. Disappointingly, when the ship from Athens reached the port of Mytilene, he was arrested by the Port Police, because of the fact that he “looked like” a migrant. Although, he possessed “genuine papers” (a passport and the refugee card) the authorities did not believe him and detained him for hours in a container located at the Port police station. *Safar* was interrogated by the Port police officers; he was forced to give the names and addresses of the people he was visiting, whilst the bona fide of his passport was disbelieved.

Port police did not want to believe that my passport was a genuine one. They were looking at it and checking it over and over again, whilst they were constantly repeating: ‘How can this be possible? There is no way this document to be genuine. Greek authorities did not want to believe that there are also migrants who can travel legally. For them we all are and will always be illegal.

As the port police officers were searching *Safar*’s bag they discovered political brochures, issued by an activist network which was advocating border crossers and in which he was an active member. “You asshole! Are you involved in these things?”, one of the officers’ yield at him. “Since when is illegal to distribute information leaflets”, *Safar* asked in order to receive port police officer’s abusive answer, “Shut up you fucking asshole!” For the police officer not only *Safar* was an activist but also smart. The everyday disbelief of the genuineness of border crossers “papers” during the “transactions” with the authorities intimidate border crossers, and further evoke and inflict traumas, horror, anxiety, psychological and misrecognition harms (Hillyard & Tombs, 2007; Pemberton, 2015; Tombs, 2019). Moreover, this also turns the official documents -and thus the refugee status

per se- into “make-believe” and “ephemeral” (Navaro-Yashin, 2007) by turning border crossers’ lives per se into make-believe.

The aforementioned examples are only but a few of the everyday enforcements, that I found occurring in Lesvos, which were shaping what Mountz describes as “the ways that states have entered into the intimacies of the daily lives of [border crossers] on a security continuum” (2012a, p. 82). Detention of border crossers within hotspots, detention centres and “camps” at the borders have been seen so far as part of a continuum of the broader politics of deterrence, externalisation and internalisation (Chapter 4). Those enforcements on behalf of the EU and the Greek state, have expanded the field of security by linking the external and internal border security measures, in such a way, that the two of them have become one (Bigo, 2000). However, as the aforementioned examples indicate the security and policing nexus is also expanding “in the intimate and mundane spaces of daily life” (Mountz, 2012). Stop and search practices, which include checks over border crossers’ documentations, arrests, detention, abuse and often arbitrary deportations in Greece are notorious as sweep operations or as Operation Xenios Zeus (Chapter 3). Both names are used formally by the Greek authorities and policy makers and are very oxymoronic and sarcastic, if one considers the fact that the former dehumanises and degrades border crossers as “human waste”, which are going to be removed, so as the nation-state will be “cleaned” and protected. The latter manifests the sarcasm and cynicism of the powerful at the expense of border crossers, since Xenios Zeus in the Greek mythology is the god who protects all “foreigners” and thus is the symbol of hospitality, a feature well bind within the Greek culture too (Chapter 3). Operation Xenios Zeus is the ultimate manifestation of what Derrida had called as “hostipitality” (Derrida, 2000). Lesvos island and, particularly, the city centre has become a space of constant control and surveillance for border crossers with the Greek authorities proceeding to an overwhelming (wo)manhunt based, in Mountz’s words, on a “racial profiling, routinely approaching people of colour and people with accents” (Mountz, 2012, p. 83). In this respect, as *Sophia*, an activist supporting border crossers highlighted,

Literally everything which is black, and moves is arrested. Sweep operations are an everyday practice here even during night. This is extremely violent. Refugees are in a constant fear. Therefore, as you have noticed they do not walk a lot in the streets even during night. They prefer to walk at the sideways in order to be as much invisible as possible. Sometimes the police officers in order to intimidate them, they set up blocks and they just sit there with the alarm on, only to horrify people. If this is not violence then what is!

Activists I interviewed during my research expressed their concerns on the overwhelming numbers of border crossers being brutally abused and tortured by the Greek authorities during these “sweep operations” in Lesvos. As the No Border Kitchen Lesvos activist group states,

Police violence is omnipresent in Lesvos. It happens in the day, in the night, in the street, in the police station, in Moria prison and to people with and without papers. Every day on this island people are controlled, harassed, humiliated, insulted and beaten (No Border Kitchen Lesvos, 2017).

For this reason, the vast majority of border crossers were coerced to adopt survival strategies in order to cope with this everyday intimidation and institutional violence. For example, they were adjusting their everyday routine in order not to be arrested and harassed by the police (Iliadou 2017, see also Coutin 2005). “If the police during the stop and search practices see that a rejection is being decided upon one’s asylum application they immediately arrest her/him”, *Sophia* highlighted. Invisibility as I found is a common survival strategy border crossers engage with in order to cope with (Andersson, 2014a ; Iliadou 2017; Coutin, 2005) state violence and the “control type of visibility” (Tazzioli & Walters, 2016, p. 446). No one in the island can really escape from the routinised and every day violent practices of control, the “panoptical surveillance” (Tazzioli & Walters, 2016, p. 446) being enforced beyond the “camp”. EU citizens, activists and even researchers on Lesvos cannot escape from the panoptical surveillance. Activists are likely to be arrested just because they might look “dark”, not “white enough”, or they might look as “foreigners” as many activists and volunteers currently are on Lesvos. Researchers conducting fieldwork on Lesvos are likely to be stopped and searched too. As one researcher told me, both himself and his team were stopped, searched and asked for identification by the police while conducting fieldwork on Lesvos. These non-isolated incidents are the so-called “collateral arrests” (in Mountz, 2012, p. 83) where non-Greek activists, volunteers, and researchers, are targeted by the police and are stopped, searched and questioned only because it happens they are around or present on Lesvos where this enforcement takes place (Mountz, 2012). The aforementioned harmful processes, as Tazzioli notes, “are processes through which people are governed, contained and stranded beyond a bordered zone of processing or containment as, for instance, a refugee camp” (Tazzioli, 2017). Furthermore, these processes are taking place quietly and silently without being visible to the world, since media attention focuses mainly on lives within the “camp”, by overlooking of what happens to people outside the “camps” and inside the (prison) islands.

Lesvos Island not only has become a space of control where the Greek authorities alone have entered in the daily lives of border crossers by policing, controlling and disciplining. The panoptical surveillance at border crossers' expense is taking place with the involvement of both the local authorities and part of the local population. Both the local authorities and the local community of Lesvos initially stood in the frontline of the so-called refugee crisis by carrying the burden of managing the overwhelming influx of border crossers in terms of reception and hospitality. The Mayor of Lesvos has even been awarded for the solidarity and aid that has provided to people (see Chapter 1). At the same time, local people have been proposed for the Nobel Prize for their solidarity towards border crossers (ibid.). As the crisis from a state of "emergency" and "exception" (Agamben, 2005) has turned into a permanent, routinised condition, and as border crossers are trapped on Lesvos in an enduring limbo (see Chapter 4), local authorities' and community's position towards them dramatically changed. A pivotal role for this shift, played the frustration and xenophobic violence manifested from a great number of local people. An intense and dispersed everyday xenophobic violence takes place which has turned Lesvos Island from the island of solidarity and hospitality (Chapter 1) to an island of daily hostility, racialised violence and impunity (InfoMigrants, 2018b). On June 2018, the organised beach Tsamakia in Mytilene city centre, which is managed by Municipality, allowed the access to the beach and the facilities to all non-Schengen nationals only after the demonstration of a passport. This decision was announced and translated into English, French and Arabic by immediately targeting border crossers (Lesvosnews, 2018). On November 2017, the vice-Mayor himself took the law in his hands by verbally and physically attacking border crossers who were on a hunger strike at Sappho's Square and were peacefully demonstrating against their immobilisation on Lesvos and the living conditions in Moria hotspot (Avraam, 2017). These two examples are only but a few from the various incidents which take place regularly on behalf of the local authorities with the impunity.

The local community has been called to carry a disproportionate burden of being the "notorious" prison island containing on hold more than 10,000 lives in multiple forms of limbo. This disproportion is intensified from the ongoing financial crisis, unemployment and the severe austerity measures. Since 2015, the local community has showed solidarity and hospitality and has even been proposed for the Nobel Prize award (see Chapter 1). However, after the shutting down of the borders, the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction regime in a city of 30,000 people more than 10,000 of border crossers are living in a state of uncertainty, enduring waiting and

precariousness. In the village of Moria, which is a village with a population of approximately 1,000 people, the largest identification, registration and reception centre on the island is located, which hosts approximately 10,000 border crossers (Chapter 4). In the areas around Moria hotspot as well as in the city centre incidents of stealing, drugs, alcohol and prostitution (Spiegel, 2017) have been increased and local people have systematically complained but their voices have not been heard. This is a form of institutional violence inflicted both to border crossers and the local people whose frustration has systematically being manipulated by Golden Dawn the neo-Nazi political party. Despite the relative invisibility of border crossers, waiting in limbo on Lesbos, on behalf of citizens and policy makers in Greece and the rest of Europe, border crossers have become hyper visible to local populations. As Mountz argues, “Thousands of asylum-seekers find themselves between states, paradoxically contained and dispersed, simultaneously hyper visible to local populations and hidden from mainland publics at national and global scales. There, they wait, their displacement prolonged” (2011b, p. 385).

Golden Dawn presence on the island dates since 2012. Although, in 2016 Golden Dawn announced the shutting down of its offices on Lesbos, the “patriotic” and Neo-Nazi group *Krypteia* has made its presence visible with physical assaults against border crossers, volunteers and local journalists. Recently a nine years old girl from Lesbos was assaulted by a member of the patriotic racist group, who mistook her for Muslim (ekathimerini, 2018a). Local journalists have been systematically been assaulted because they have concealed and publicised racist violence of the so-called “patriots”, while local women journalists are additionally exposed to sexist violence because of the fact they are women (emprosnet, 2018). On April 2018, a racist group of approximately 200 people attacked border crossers who were peacefully demonstrating at Sappho’s Square for the deaths inside Moria hotspot and for the living conditions. This attack was the most violent in the history of the island with the s- called patriots throwing stones, fireworks and flares against border crossers by shouting “burn them alive” (Are You Syrious, 2018). On September 2018, racist groups vandalised a memorial dedicated to shipwreck’s victims just a few kilometers away from the city centre (ekathimerini, 2018b). This memorial have been vandalised twice within one year and it is the ultimate manifestation of cultural harm, violence and moral shaming (Copson, 2018; Galtung, 1990). Fake news has played its own crucial role in cultivating the overwhelming racist violence which escalates until now on Lesbos. The hypothetical desecration of national or religious symbols by Muslim border crossers has fueled outrage, and even more violent assaults on behalf of the local community.

On October 2016 when I started my fieldwork due to some fake news which were accusing border crossers for preventing a regional and national custom taking place in Sappho's Square, which includes the lowering of the flag by the Greek army, there was an outburst of racist violence by the patriots. The patriots physically attacked border crossers and activists. Currently, there were incidents where individuals have attacked border crossers by accusing them of being thieves or that they are culpable for the financial decline of their businesses. In a most recent violent attack a 16 years old Syrian boy was seriously shot by a local man, in the village of Moria, who unfairly accused the boy of attempting to break into his house (InfoMigrants, 2018a).

The aforementioned examples should not be seen only as racist and xenophobic violence. They should be seen as a paradoxical way of enforcement, social control, panoptical surveillance and policing of border crossers exercised by the local population and local authorities, which have literally taken the law into their hands. Thus, border crossers are governed, disciplined and exposed to state violence even in cases where the state might appear absent (Mountz, 2011a, p. 119). In the case of the xenophobic violence, state violence is present through its absence, inaction and abandonment of border crossers to the brutality (and impunity) of the exclusion and structural racist practices of the local authorities and the racialised violence of the Neo-Nazis and other individuals. The aforementioned forms of violence and harms would not be inflicted upon border crossers if the politics of closed borders and deterrence had not transformed Lesvos into a spatial confinement by holding border crossers in an enduring waiting and limbo.

As if all the aforementioned forms of violence within the Prison Island were not enough border crossers must endure additional stealthy forms of harms; those inflicted by stuckedness, time and enduring waiting (see below).

6.2 Temporal Confinements, Stolen Time and State Violence

After traversing the threshold of Lesvos, border crossers find themselves locked up in a temporal confinement and stuck within the border of time. This is a form of bordering technique and migration governance through time and over time (Andersson, 2014b; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018). As Tazzioli argues, "migrations are governed, selected and contained even through the establishment of temporal borders and through mechanisms of control that affect and disrupt the temporality of migrants' journeys" (2018, p. 15). Time and waiting –temporality- is implicated with multilayered ways in the governance of migration and is a fundamental feature of the border regime. As Ruben

Andersson argues, “Temporality (...) has become a multifaceted tool and vehicle – even a weapon of sorts – in the ‘fight against illegal migration’” (2014b, p. 2). As the border regime and border controls are proliferating in space, particularly in the light of the so-called refugee crisis, temporal borders and controls also proliferate twofold. Firstly, temporal borders and controls unfold in the form of, what William Walters calls, “live governance” (Walters, 2016, p. 797); that is, technological surveillance, governing, intelligence reporting (i.e. EUROSUR), risk assessments, so as policy makers from distance can follow and monitor movement in real time (Andersson, 2014b, p. 7; Walters, 2016, p. 797; see also Chapter 4). Such “live governance”, also, allows speedy and instant interventions and prevention before unauthorised border crossers arrive to Europe. In this sense, physical (sea and land) borders “are colonized in a temporal sense” (Andersson, 2014b, p. 8). Secondly, temporal borders and controls are enforced through, both exceptional- accelerated and, at the same time, slow-paced, asynchronous rhythms of confinement and bureaucratic procedures (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013). Those involve a multiplicity states of stasis, “stuckedness” (Hage, 2009b), and waiting in order one to be allowed or denied access to rights and international protection (Section 5.3.1). According to Tazzioli, “the temporality of control and temporal borders are functional to slow down and disrupt migrants’ autonomous temporalities and geographies of movement, and to hasten at the same time the channels of deportation” (2018, p. 15). The temporality of migration controls and temporal borders have found their ultimate materialisation through the hotspot system (Chapter 4). Inside and even outside hotspots, as the Lesvos case (Prison Island) shows, border crossers are kept in a state of uncertainty, waiting and, most of them, are stuck in a protracted juridical limbo. The islands, similar to camps and hotspots, are machines of spatial and temporal surveillance, albeit as Andersson notes, they are “creaking, imperfect one[s]” (2014a, p. 230). There, border crossers are legally bounded to comply with fast-paced, fast-track, decisive and irreversible temporal deadlines and time schedules, so as to be considered eligible for international protection, relocation and family reunification procedures. However, while border crossers are expected to comply with fast-paced temporal deadlines, state’s responses instead are slow-paced, characterised by time lags, postpones and cancellations (Tazzioli, 2018, p. 14). For instance, as I showed in Chapter 5, after the implementation of the fast-track border procedures, all asylum applications should be completed and processed within 25 days. As I found in practice, border crossers, who have applied for international protection, wait instead for months and years to receive a reply (Section 5.3.1). The same pattern is repeated for the family reunification, as well as relocation. Specifically, for relocation

border crossers can wait for years but only to witness the whole relocation scheme eventually collapse (Section 5.3.3). The temporal borders and controls are border techniques for the governance, regulation and discipline of the unauthorised human mobility, through shifting dates and temporal deadlines (Andersson, 2014b, p. 3; Tazzioli, 2018, p. 16), for which border crossers are obliged to be aware of and adapt to. They are part of the wider and powerful geography and “architecture of exclusion” (Mountz 2011, p. 383), enforced on islands like Lesbos and as such aim, as Mountz argues, to “capture bodies in trajectories between states” (*ibid.*), as well as to exclude, reject, deport, mentally exhaust and deter. The temporal borders and controls work synergistically with the spatial and bureaucratic controls (see Chapter 4 and 5) by generating further restrictions, denial of rights and entitlements, disruptions of the autonomy of movement (Andersson, 2014b, p. 3) by suspending border crossers in time and space (Mountz 2011, p. 383). As Tazzioli argues,

When strategies of spatial containment are not sufficient in limiting mobility and narrowing access to protection, states introduce temporal borders that vertically cut across the sites where migrants are identified and registered, producing a further hierarchization of “legitimate” mobilities” (Tazzioli, 2018, p. 20).

The temporal aspect of migration governance is not a new phenomenon, rather it is the outcome of a continuum, a routine of pre-existing migration control practices and techniques of governing (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016, pp. 317–318) (see also Chapters 3 and 4). Julien Jeandesboz and Polly Pallister-Wilkins, highlight the crucial interplay between the crisis and the routines of control. As they note the spectacle of crises (like the so-called refugee crisis spectacle) and the routines of (temporal/spatial) controls are relational notions (*ibid.*). Through this lens, the spectacle of the refugee crisis, misery and deaths (Chapter 1), have routinised and normalised the EU strategies of spatial and temporal confinements, suspension and management of border crossers within border zones and islands, like Lesbos.

As I found on Lesbos, the Greek and the EU authorities maintain border crossers in a state of “permanent temporariness” (in Mountz, Wright, Miyares, & Bailey, 2002, p. 343), and thus liminality, which similarly to Andersson’s findings, make Lesbos to look like “a pause, a holding of breath before [border crossers] push across the final hurdle into Europe” (Andersson, 2014a, p. 217). The “collateral casualties” in human cost of the temporal borders and controls enforcements are intense and harmful. These can be

articulated as follows; (i) The enforcement of a violent state of stuckedness and waiting, a temporal and spatial suspension between states of an increasing number of populations beyond the hotspots, inside islands and border zones. As Khosravi argues, “border crossers are trapped in the spatial and temporal cracks between nation states” (2011, p. 65). This state of being has also been normalised and routinised in the name of “exception” and emergency (crisis); (ii) An increased number of border crossers who live in conditions of permanent temporariness, stuckedness and waiting, experience the theft of their time especially when a rejection or deportation emerges, after many years wasted in transit zones and host countries (Khosravi, 2018b, p. 40); (iii) Being kept in a state of stuckedness and waiting inflicts necroharm (Chapter 7) upon border crossers, a cruel abandonment by the Greek authorities to the violence of time, waiting and social death.

6.2.1 Stolen Time, Stolen Lives

According to Bridget Haas “existential limbo” is the “subjective and temporal state of being in which the asylum system, in the present moment, is understood as the locus of suffering and in which life and meaning making are defined by a sense of immobility” (Haas, 2017, p. 75). “Existential limbo” is a form of stuckedness (Hage, 2009a). For more than a decade I have been witnessing and experiencing the violence of stuckedness and waiting, suffering and discomfort of border crossers I came across in my life’s trajectories unfolding as a continuum in time and space (Iliadou, 2012 see also Vignette). The harmful consequences of stuckedness were dominant in various backlog cases which were in the state of stuckedness and waiting for a response for their asylum case for more than a decade. Most of them have occupied multiple and shifting positionalities within my life; beneficiaries, colleagues, friends and research participants. Since the early 2000, when I started supporting border crossers in Greece and particularly on Lesbos, many border crossers who were former detainees and worked for more than a decade for NGOs as interpreters, cultural intermediates or volunteers, experienced the loss of their asylum cases’ files within the bureaucratic hole, and apart from experiencing stuckedness in the form of protracted legal and bureaucratic limbo for years, they had to start the asylum and bureaucratic procedures from the beginning. This time and waiting period was experienced by them as stolen (Khosravi, 2014, 2018b) or wasted under which all their life achievements and the time they had invested, were misrecognised and devaluated (Haas, 2017). This was generating them the feeling of a life which was eventually pointlessly wasted or not fulfilled. From a social harm perspective this is an infliction of relational and misrecognition harms (Canning, 2017; Pemberton, 2015; Tombs, 2019) (see Chapter 1/Section 1.2).

Juma, is a border crosser from Afghanistan, who entered Greece through Lesbos in 2008. When I first met him he was detained in Pagani detention centre, in the cell of the unaccompanied minors. *Juma* spent more than a decade waiting for a final decision for his asylum case. While he was waiting he went to school, learned Greek, worked for various NGOs, and made friends. In 2017 his asylum claim was rejected in a second instance degree and, thus, the only option that was left for him was to appeal to the Higher Court. Throughout the research period I witnessed *Juma's* agonising struggle of searching, requesting and collecting certifications, verification and references from all the organisations, networks and employees he had worked for in the last decade in order to present them as evidences to the Higher Court of his achievements while living in Greece. "This is outrageous, in other EU countries I would have been granted citizenship for all these things I have accomplished here", *Juma* told me. I never learnt whether he found the courage and money to present himself before the Higher Court, in order to ask for the obvious; the ten years that he spent in Greece -the time and years of his life being wasted due to Greek state's time lag- to be acknowledged and at least to be returned to him in the form of a refugee status or humanitarian protection. I am not sure if his appeal was rejected or he just stopped pointlessly trying and waiting for something, which would never occur. This protracted waiting and awaiting, systematic rejections, precariousness and liminality – in other words stuckedness- exhausted him physically, psychologically and emotionally. One day I just saw a short post with his photo on Facebook. He was holding an IOM's plastic bag and was standing in front of a plane. He was smiling but his eyes looked sad. The post was accompanied by a short farewell comment to all of his Facebook friends, "This is it. Goodbye Europe, I am going back home." Voluntary returns back home, like deportations, are another form of "waste removal"; a spatial expulsion but also a temporal one (De Genova, p. 253, Khosravi 2018, p. 39).

Most of the border crossers I interviewed, between 2016 and 2017, experienced similar states of stuckedness for months and years, and devaluation of their life-time due to a rejection or deportation. This waiting time between recognition and expulsion was experienced as an empty, uneventful time which was producing existential immobility and stuckedness; a state under which one cannot move on with one's life (Hage, 2009a). Border crossers of now are experiencing similar real and existential waitings with border crossers of then (see Vignette, see also the cases of *Sams'*, *Danny's* and *Juma's* in this section). Both border crossers of then and now, were experiencing stuckedness "by inhabiting a liminal position between recognition and expulsion while (a)waiting for a decision for their asylum application" (Iliadou, 2012, p. 333). Both border crossers of then

and now, were experiencing uncertainty, cancellation and misrecognition. In any active choice they were formulating, there was always a “what if?” in their minds. Would they be accepted, rejected or deported? Thus, they had no idea on how to spend their lives and how much of their time or effort to invest in various activities. Should they attend a Greek school and/or the university? Should they fall in love? Should they marry, make family and children? But what if they will be rejected and be deported? What will happen to them and their beloved ones? How can they replace the best years of their life, their youth, the time they invested and spent to learn Greek, to gain skills, make friends, settle down and be embedded (Khosravi, 2014, 2018c)? How can they replace the time which was lost, “wasted” (Griffiths, Rogers, & Anderson, 2013, p. 21; Haas, 2017, p. 86), “robbed”, “stolen” (Khosravi, 2018c, 2018a, 2018b) from them or “usurped” (Andersson, 2014b, p. 3), particularly after a rejection and/or deportation? In Lesvos border crossers have been investing, but mainly wasting, as a form of capital similar to money, not just time, but “the time of their life” (Iliadou 2017). “I have not lived my life as I dreamed and as I wanted to”, *Sams* an Afghan interviewee, who lives in Greece for more than a decade, kept saying in a serene sadness, echoing most of my interviewees. *Danny* a border crosser from Afghanistan reached Lesvos in 2008 as an unaccompanied minor. Although, he was living for almost a decade in Lesvos his legal status was not yet regularised, since the final answer to his claim for international protection was still pending. *Danny* was captured in a liminal position between the old and a new asylum system, a state which is legally framed with the cold bureaucratic term “backlog” (Chapter 5). He is one of the some thousands border crossers in Greece whose asylum claim is still pending. *Danny* is in the stage of an appeal and during the last decade in a state of enduring stuckedness and waiting. Although, he was working as an interpreter for an NGO which provides legal aid to border crossers, the NGO has done little to help him with his asylum claim. When I met *Danny* in 2016 outside of the camp he was working, he told me: “I will eventually receive an answer on my asylum case when I die”. Temporal stuckedness, in *Danny’s* case, unfolds in the form of cancellation, hopelessness and abandonment “where hopes for a (better) future seem impossible and where death appears as an ever-present potentiality” (Jefferson et al., 2018, p. 7). *Danny* is only 23 years old and he is single. One of his friends, who was passing by was teasing him and told him, “I will find you a nice girl to marry”, but *Danny* disappointed replied, “Who is going to marry me without papers?” These everyday existential, real and painful anxieties and realities are disregarded and misrecognised by policy makers and the International Organisations’ staff, who speak about “options”, but they only provide coerced choices to border crossers. These coerced choices are usually

framed under cold bureaucratic terms like “asylum”, “relocation”, “readmission”, “deportation”, “voluntary repatriation”, “reunification”, “rejection” (see Chapter 5). In the eyes of the EU policy makers and Greek authorities neither border crossers’ lives nor their time and achievements count. Ghassan Hage (2009a, p. 2) and Ayuero (2011) remind us that “who waits for who” and how one waits - the conditions under which someone waits - is class structured. It is mainly the underclass which endures many protracted waitings a fact that raises the issue of the asymmetrical and hierarchical power relations of, in Hage’s words, “who has the power to make their [border crossers’] time appear more valuable than somebody else’s time” (*ibid.*). As Jefferson *et al.* emphasise, “Stuckness (...) is not a choice. Stuckness is a given and for many a curse. But a curse with which they (or many of them at least) deal or actively anticipate” (Jefferson et al., 2018, pp. 10–11). Stuckedness in reality is a deliberate enforcement and a well-designed deterrence policy which aims to make border crossers’ lives unlivable by killing them mentally, quietly, and slowly, like *Sams* and *Danny*, and/or by coercing them to “voluntary” return “home”, like *Juma*.

As Khosravi notes, “time is a form of capital similar to money that can be invested, saved or wasted” (Khosravi, 2018c, p. 33, 2018b, p. 40). The theft and usurpation of border crossers’ time and thus life – “the time of their life” - generates, as Khosravi argues, “a sense of uncertainty, shame, depression and anxiety. This can lead to sleep disorders and psychosomatic pain. Dread, angst or guilt are all components of the experience of waiting” (2014, p. 1). *Sams*, was struggling from a chronic depression and anxiety which has been deteriorated through the passage of time due to his protracted stuckedness. Furthermore, he was dealing with feelings of guilt and shame generated by his family back in Afghanistan, since he is often told that after so many years in Europe he has accomplished nothing and that he has failed. The last three years *Sams* is harming himself. Bridget Haas in her research found that apart from anxiety and precariousness border crossers experience the feeling of powerlessness (Haas, 2017, p. 83). As *Sams*, *Juma* and *Danny*’s cases indicate *contra* to the time prisoners spend inside jails, border crossers who are confined in a state of stuckedness, “do not have the luxury of a sentence” (Griffiths et al., 2013, p. 20). Temporality, as Jefferson *et al.* argue, “animates stuckness as an important dimension of confinement” (2018, p. 2). After all, to be stuck in a place, equally means to be stuck in time (*ibid.*, p. 3).

Stuckedness, however, is a complicated and oxymoronic experience which is not experienced the same by all border crossers. It can involve patience and impatience, persistence and abandonment, hope and cancellation, agency and passivity. According to

Lesvos Solidarity activist network, border crossers can easily “become depressed or lose hope while waiting. Sometimes people feel like they are wasting their lives and their talents” (Solidarity Lesvos, 2018). Jusi Jauhiainen in his research on Lesvos found that some border crossers experienced stuckedness as a process during which they learned to patiently endure waiting (Jauhiainen, 2017, p. 25; Khosravi, 2017, p. 79). What I found as a dominant feature on Lesvos in the post-refugee crisis era was that border crossers were experiencing a state of spatial, temporal and “existential stuckedness” (Hage, 2009) and waiting mainly outside the detention and the hotspot. Like *Danny*, border crossers who reached Lesvos in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis, although not being detained in Moria hotspot, they were not allowed to travel outside Lesvos due to the geographical restriction regime (Section 4.3.2). They were experiencing stuckedness in the form of “protracted displacement” (Norum, Mostafanezhad, & Sebro, 2016, p. 61) while waiting on the island of Lesvos wherein their lives were suspended in time and space. *Thalis* a border crosser from Ghana, who arrived in Lesvos in the aftermath of the refugee crisis argued,

I have spent a lot of money to reach here and I have borrowed a lot of money in order to pay my daily expenses and the hotel, but I will not be able to pay anymore, and I will thus be forced to return to Moria camp. It is very dirty there. Too many people are living there. The toilets and bathrooms are very dirty and even during winter they bathe with cold water. I do not know what is going to happen. I am wasting time of my life without doing anything. I do not have friends, I do not have money. I have nothing to do. I am sitting all day and thinking the same things all over again. I awake up very late in the morning and I sleep very early in the night. I have nothing to do here all day. I might not be in prison but the island for me is a prison.

Many border crossers are coerced to prostitution in order to financially survive. One of the central parks in Mytilene has become a hub where young border crossers are coerced to “sell” their bodies to local men. This is also a form of state violence which is exercised through the lens of deterrence and preemption. Stuckedness and waiting within the temporal confinement and the border of time is also obscene because it penetrates to the intimate and mundane spaces of the daily life with a stealthy, quiet and silent way, to such an extent that it becomes unnoticed, normalised and, thus, is not perceived as violence at all. Furthermore, the protracted stuckedness and waiting within the border of time pushes border crossers in becoming themselves the border (Khosravi, 2011, p. 99; Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 12). As Khosravi argues by reflecting on Etienne Balibar’s work, “borders have become invisible borders, situated everywhere and nowhere. Hence,

undesirable people are not expelled by the border, they are forced to be the border” (Khosravi, 2011, p. 99).

6.2.2 The Violence of *Stuckedness* and Waiting

What has become a first-hand lived experience through the passage of time as an activist, local, professional and researcher is that keeping people in *stuckedness*, enduring waiting, uncertainty and precariousness is a well-designed deterrent strategy. Temporality, waiting and stuckedness technique aims to make border crossers’ lives unlivable in the host countries or border zones, in order to be eventually discouraged and coerced to return back from where they came from in the first place. Keeping border crossers in a state of stuckedness and waiting, either in humiliating, degrading, appalling reception and living conditions inside camps and hotspots like Moria, or in temporal and spatial confinements in Prison Islands like Lesbos, where additionally border crossers experience the xenophobic violence, exploitation and police intimidation, is a manifestation of state violence. Stuckedness is inextricable with state violence. Additionally, stuckedness and waiting is one of the cruelest ironies being enforced through the politics of deterrence. As Haas emphasises, “border crossers who are defined by their mobility (as forced migrants) become spatially and temporally stuck in a protracted state of waiting” once in Europe (Haas, 2017, p. 87). The violence of stuckedness and waiting that border crossers endure within the Prison Island is an enforced, contemporary and sophisticated tool of torture, that EU and Greece use, in order to mentally, emotionally and physically exhaust, and deter border crossers, who want to come or are already in Europe, from coming, staying or continuing their journey forward. From this angle, time during stuckedness is a time which border crossers are spending, killing or doing (Andersson, 2014, p. 223; Hasselberg, 2016; Matthews, 1999). However, time is wasted, spent and killed but also “spends” and “wastes” border crossers’ lives and dreams (Iliadou 2017). Time kills. Waiting and (a)waiting kills too. Time and (a)waiting kills and exterminates quietly, silently and slowly, mentally, emotionally, and then physically, capitalising what *Serapheim*, who supports survivors of torture observed, “The powerful do not have to touch people with their hands in order to torture and exterminate them” (*ibid.*), since the violence of time, *stuckedness*, waiting, uncertainty of not knowing (when and if they are ever going to leave) (Hasselberg, 2016; Turnbull 2015) do the dirty work for them. No wonder why self-harms and suicide attempts in the Prison Island have become a routine.

Border crossers do not only experience their time being stolen or multiple forms of violence due to the enduring waiting and stuckedness. They experience a violent

abandonment in the violence of time, stuckedness and waiting. During their temporal and spatial stuckedness border crossers experience the action and inaction, and indifference of policy makers and the border regime, by being given a minimal humanitarian care, assistance and access to rights and international protection. This minimal care balances between pity, compassion and repression (Fassin, 2005; Ticktin, 2006). As Ticktin argues, “humanitarianism is inevitably accompanied by practices of policing; compassion comes with repression (Ticktin, 2016, p. 258). Through this compassion-repression lens border crossers are “kept alive but in a state of injury” (Mbembe 2003:21). In this respect, after arriving in Lesvos and stuck for months or years, border crossers are not allowed to go back home on their own, even if they want to, unless they are deported or escorted (see *Juma’s* case), they are not allowed to move forward to Europe, but at the same time they are not allowed to be free. They are not directly killed but they are not allowed to live. As some police officers working in Pagani detention used to tell me “do not be so sweet with them [border crossers] because they will spread the message to the others that we are treating them nicely here and they will want to come”. Meanwhile, other high and low rank police officers used to say,

Pagani is a five-star hotel for the illegal migrants! This is what we have, and this is what they will get. If they do not like it, they should get the hell out from Greece and go back to their countries. We do not keep them here to entertain them, but to spread the message to the others waiting at the borders that the conditions here are not good and they should not come here.

Border crossers through the lens of deterrence are left to suffer and slowly die. Their lives are maintained through a minimal humanitarian care, but only to exist as liminal minimal existences. According to, Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee and Surindar Dhesi,

The permanent wounding of individuals, rather than their direct and active killing, can be used as a means of control. Suffering therefore can become a political technology, where certain groups are exposed to conditions in which they are “kept alive but in a state of injury” (Mbembe 2003:21). Within this necropolitical system of domination, conditions that are “obscene, vulgar and grotesque” (Mbembe 1992:1) become sanctioned for political ends (2017, p. 1268).

Stuckedness is a state enforcement which has been implemented in the name of humanitarianism and the state of exception due to the refugee crisis (“end the human suffering and restore the public order”). As a result, border crossers experience the enforcement of a temporal and spatial stuckedness and confinement which has brought the

exact opposite results. Instead of ending the human suffering, it proliferated it by creating border zones and islands of abandonment and necropolitical violence. Through this lens border crossers experience degradation, devaluation and dehumanization by being exposed to social death. In this respect, stuckedness and waiting is state violence, which inflicts “necroharm” upon border crossers. As I will also explain in the next chapter, state violence in respect to temporality, stuckedness and waiting is also necropolitical violence which generates “necroharm” (Chapter 7) upon border crossers; a spatial and temporal stuckedness in a social death mode of neither dead nor alive. The violence of stuckedness and waiting is part of the state’s practices. It is a ritual and routine of spatial and temporal borders and controls. Therefore, stuckedness is integral of the temporal border controls which aim to discipline, manage, regulate and exclude the undesirables by “narrowing down the space of protection as much as possible and to temporally anticipate the threshold of deportability” (Tazzioli, 2018, p. 18).

Conclusion

As scholars have denoted a pivotal aspect of waiting has to do with the conditions under which one is waiting (Auyero, 2011). What I have been experiencing the last two decades is a violent abandonment of border crossers to degrading, humiliating, life threatening conditions and social death. My research findings on Lesbos indicate that border crossers, while they are waiting in the “Prison Island”, as they commonly call Lesbos, in order to complete the registration, identification and asylum procedures, they are exposed to multiple and multilayered forms of everyday violence and harm. Border crossers are intimidated, harassed and abused by the state officials through stop and search practices everywhere and constantly inside the Prison Island. The range of violence is so widespread that border crossers are coerced to adjust their routine in order to become as much invisible as possible (Coutin, 2005). The everyday life turns to be for them a living hell. Border crossers also endure protracted waiting due to the slow and long bureaucratic procedures surrounding the registration and the asylum. They also have to endure dehumanisation and segregation into bureaucratic and penal “categories” and “sub-categories” (vulnerable/non-vulnerable, delinquents/non-delinquents). They must endure waiting for months and even for years in order to regulate their legal status or to be deported. While they are waiting they are forced to experience the humiliation of living in appalling, humiliating and degrading conditions like those in Moria hotspot, where queuing in order to use the lavatories, to receive food, to see the doctors, to speak with the staff, to seek asylum is an everyday systematic practice. At the same time, exploitation, violence, rapes, trafficking

and torture within the hotspot and the Prison Island is also an everyday reality. All these are added to their already existing suffering from their country of origin and their journey to Europe. In addition to the everyday violence, time and waiting expose border crossers to a slow and enduring “death” with enormous psychological and emotional consequences. Stuckedness, time and waiting are part of the deterrent strategies the EU and the Greek policy makers deploy in order to preemptively deter, prevent and halt border crossers from arriving to Europe. As a result, the violence of time, stuckedness and waiting becomes a direct, obscene and brute form of state violence.

In the next chapter I will focus on the thanatopolitical border regime and the governing of unwanted human mobility through violence and death and the infliction of two new types of harms which are linked with the physical and social death. I have called these “thanatoharms” and “necroharm”.

CHAPTER 7

Necroharmes and Thanatoharmes: The Politics of Death and Violence

In the previous chapter I focused on the spatial and temporal confinements which confine border crossers' lives beyond the institutional walls of the camp inside Lesbos. I focused on two central and interlinked processes and deterrence enforcements; the process of confinement beyond detention (Mountz, 2012; Tazzioli, 2017; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018) and the process of "the violence of stuckedness and waiting" (Iliadou 2018). I argued that the former has produced and diffused the lived experience of confinement beyond the Moria hotspot "in the intimate and mundane spaces of the daily life" (Mountz, 2011) in the form of a "carceral continuum" (Foucault, 1975, p. 303) and stuckedness, by inflicting harm and exposing border crossers to everyday violence (Das, 2013; Scheper-Hughes, 2004; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). The latter, has produced the lived experience of the temporal confinement and stuckedness within the border of time by trapping border crossers in an indefinite, protracted displacement and existential inertia by inflicting more harm. I argued that both processes and enforcements are designed to make border crossers' lives unliveable through abandonment and social death. This is a form of state violence which I named as "the violence of stuckedness and waiting".

The aim of this chapter is to analyse two violent interlinked processes which are the product of the deterrence enforcements being implemented in a continuum in time and space. I will focus on thanatopolitics as a mode of border management, regulation and governance of the unwanted human mobility through the intentional infliction of physical harms, death and violence. I will show that the EU policy makers, in order to prevent and deter border crossers from reaching Europe, enforce the politics of death and violence through left-to-die practices, abandonment, inaction and indifference (De León, 2015; Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b). The governing of unwanted human mobility through violence and death is the Janus-face of deterrence. I name as "thanatoharms" the harms which are generated as a result of the thanatopolitical borders and deterring-killing

enforcements and processes. I will then move on to show that thanatoharms produce and inflict multilayer and overlapped, more stealthy and obscene cultural, psychological and emotional harms by exposing both the dead, the living and even whole communities in enduring necropolitical stuckness, protracted displacement and social death. I name these harms as “necroharm”.

Vignette: The Borders of Death

One cold December of 2012 on Lesbos I woke up from the sudden ring of the phone. It was early in the morning. The sad voice of one of the members of the local activist network I was involved with on the other end of the line was urging me to wake up and go to help. “The sea has washed ashore dead bodies!” the voice said and burst into tears. A shipwreck took place during the night with many casualties. Border crossers’ dead bodies were found by local people, frozen on the pebbles of the coasts near the city centre. Dead bodies and various objects were scattered here and there reminding of a battlefield in a time of peace. These were the discarded bodies and belongings of those who were not allowed to belong (Davies & Isakjee, 2015, p. 93). A member of the rescue crew told me that the position of the dead bodies on the shore was revealing that some of the border crossers reached Lesbos alive but eventually froze to death. The frozen death found them “on the doorstep of Europe” (Cabot, 2014).

The mass media and particularly the local news reproduced over and over again the macabre details and photos of the tragic end of the people fleeing wars, conflicts and persecution. Some of the relatives of the dead, who knew that their people were travelling within this fatal dinghy, started reaching Lesbos in order to identify the dead bodies of their beloved ones and repatriate them. Meanwhile, other relatives were reaching Lesbos with the hope to find the ones who were missing. The tragic deaths and events enabled a macabre industry of opportunists who were keen to “assist” the relatives with the bureaucratic and identification procedures but by making profit at the expense of border crossers’ relatives. In the next few days more dead bodies were detected in the sea. The number of fatalities of the shipwreck was finalised; 28 dead among which the 7 were unidentified and only 1 survivor. The one and only survivor, an unaccompanied minor, was photographed and interviewed multiple times by the ruthless journalists who only wanted to produce and be paid for the article of the day. Pain always sells after all. The survivor was also interrogated multiple times by the police and was eventually left alone.

The 28 dead bodies were “stored” for several days within the hospital’s fridges, since there was no space available within the morgue (Kovras & Robins, 2017), and waited there for their burial and all the bureaucratic procedures to be completed. The burial was delaying to be carried out and, as a result, the macabre smell of the human flesh in the state of sepsis and decomposition overwhelmed the hospital. Although, Lesvos Island was an entry point for border crossers, since the early 2000’s, there were neither adequate facilities within the morgue to store the bodies nor social services and staff managing the depressing issues of border related deaths. There was not even enough space within the town’s cemetery, a Muslim cemetery or an Imam to perform the burials and rituals of the funerals (Kovras & Robins, 2017; Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016; Stefatos, Papadopoulos, & Howe Haralambous, 2015; Stierl, 2016, p. 180). All the bureaucratic procedures were performed by activists like me, whilst the death rituals by border crossers who were living for many years in Lesvos and had become experts by experience in performing them. The local authorities were not keen to assist or take any actions in dealing with the management of the deaths, and they only wanted to get rid of the dead bodies with their “annoying” relatives by relocating the burden of responsibility to the local activist networks supporting border crossers.

I remember that the funeral of the 28, eventually, took place after an agonizing struggle, discomfort and pain generated by the inconsistency, the chaotic, slow and long bureaucratic and identification procedures, and mainly due to the inaction and indifference of the local authorities. I will never forget a representative of the local authorities, who unwilling to deal and assist with the burial of the dead border crossers, suggested to me, “We should bury the dead in the dump so as local Christians will not be offended.” When the burial eventually took place, it was inappropriately performed. The workers of the Municipality, without knowing the religious and cultural rituals and customs, buried the dead bodies in the wrong position by violating the religious and cultural doctrine (Stefatos et al., 2015, p. 14), and by inflicting cultural shock and harm upon border crossers’ relatives and community. As a result, the workers had to exhume the dead bodies and bury them again. The process of repatriation of the dead bodies of the shipwreck of 2012, to the countries of origin or to other EU countries, was also characterised by long, slow, chaotic, inconsistent, exhausting procedures and indifference. I remember the agonising and enduring process under which, the relatives of one of the dead border crossers, who travelled from Sweden in order to identify and repatriate the dead, went through. They were ignored by the local authorities, misinformed, they faced the inaccessible bureaucratic fences and after weeks they faced the indifference and brutality of the

prosecutor who literally threw the documentation needed for the repatriation back in their faces by shouting at them, “Well, here you are! Take your bloody corpses.”

That cold December of 2012 I witnessed the first shipwreck with so many casualties in human lives -until then- within the recent history of Lesvos. It is not that shipwrecks and border-related deaths did not occur before, but the particular event was until then the most fatal one, which caused a collateral shock to the people of Lesvos. Suddenly, the unauthorised border crossings -a phenomenon which has been unfolding and escalating on Lesvos over the last two decades- came out from its invisibility via the recovered dead corpses, shocked and sensitised even for a while the indifferent public opinion. This fatal event was also the hallmark of what would gradually unfold as the “refugee crisis” since it inaugurated the mass arrivals of Syrian (but not exclusively) border crossers and the increasing phenomenon of the intentional representation of border-related deaths as unforeseen and random accidents by policy makers. Although, I had buried the traumatic experience of the dreadful event of December 2012, in the bottom of my subconscious -a process which in psychology is framed as “repression of traumatic memory” (National Health System, 2007) - the macabre spectre of death haunting Lesvos, which I confronted later throughout the research process, evoked the trauma. The spectre of death was creeping all over Lesvos. This fact was vividly portrayed from the numerous disposed life jackets, plastic or wooden boats -the “refugee waste” (Gillespie, 2018, p. 150)- which was scattered all around the coasts. The irony was that the “refugee waste” had a formal place to be buried –in a municipal dump known as “life jackets’ graveyard” (Gillespie, 2018, p. 149)- but “refugees” per se did not. Due to the lack of facilities and space, border crossers were buried in an allotment illegally operating as a graveyard. In a sense this illegal site capitalised the cynic epilogue for the “illegal” lives, who even in death were not allowed to “belong” (Davies & Isakjee, 2015, p. 93) even though their waste somehow was.

7.1 Thanatopolical Border Regime: The Politics of Death and Violence

When crimes begin to pile up they become invisible.

When sufferings become unendurable the cries are no longer heard.

(Bertold Brecht in P. Davies et al., 2014, p. vii)

Since 2014, the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) has recorded the disappearance and death of over 22,500 migrants (Laczko, Singleton, & Black, 2017, p. iii). Whilst, over the course of the last two decades “more than 60,000 migrants have embarked on fatal journeys around the world, never to return to their loved ones” (Brian & Laczko, 2016, p. iii; see also Laczko et al., 2017; Singleton, Laczko, & Black, 2017). These numbers, however, are just estimation since there are not accurate data for the numbers of deaths of border crossers. As Brian and Laczko argues, “The real number is unknown, as many deaths are never registered, especially in more remote regions of the world” (Brian & Laczko, 2016, p. iii), and thus the existing data should be better understood as “a minimum estimate of the true number of global migrant fatalities” (Singleton et al., 2017, p. 4). In other words, “for every dead body washed up on the shores of the developed world experts estimate there are at least two others that are never recovered” (Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 1). The United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees have recorded 54 dead and missing people in Greece during 2017, 441 in 2016, and 799 in 2015 (UNHCR, 2018b). Death made its presence dominant through border crossers’ corpses which were washed ashore -in whole or in parts, identifiable or decomposed. The Aegean and Mediterranean Sea, as well as other land and sea border pathways which border crossers traverse in order to reach Europe, have become tools of “boundary enforcement and a strategic slayer of border crossers” (De León, 2015, p. 67; see also Kovras & Robins, 2017, p. 159). They have also become enormous graveyards (Albahari, 2015a, 2016; Doty, 2011, p. 600; Tazzioli, 2015). According to Stefatos et al, “Lesvos, the border, the region, is not only assigned the management of a refugee crisis, but also the management of death, a death that is constantly being normalised” (Stefatos et al., 2015, p. 13). Local people of Lesvos -similarly to Maurizio Albahari’s findings (Albahari, 2016, p. 275)- might not eat fishes due to the feeling of disgust being generated by the idea that fishes might have fed on human flesh from bodies never recovered from the sea. *Ali*, a Syrian border crosser I interviewed during my research could not stop asking me in a state of shock and awe, “Do you know how many of our own people have been fed by the fishes?” Fishermen in Lesvos are horrified every time they fish in Lesvos, as one of them told me, since very often parts of human remains are caught within their nets, “We are even afraid to call the Coastguard anymore when we fish human remains. The procedure of the investigation is very long and until it is completed we are not allowed to fish. We are just throwing them back to the sea.” *Anna*, one of the long-term residents and activists interviewee told me,

I have a very intense feeling, and I think many of us has it too, that as we are swimming we will come across a dead body. Most of us have this macabre feeling because we have first-hand experiences. In most of the beaches that we used to go for swimming dead bodies were found. In Thermi, Aghios Fokas, Eressos, Tavari, Podara, Polichnitos, Plomari, Varia [popular and touristic beaches], at the airport, everywhere.

As I was listening to *Anna's* narration, I thought that death is not just the ugliest aspect of this particular border crossing, although it brings to the surface multiple political and ethical issues. The way that people die, are recovered (in whole, in parts or in decomposition) or are dispersed (within the sea and within the fishes' bellies) makes this ugly aspect a macabre tale and even worse. It makes it an unbearable tale of everyday horror.

The governing of the unwanted human mobility in the name of "humanitarian security" (Chapter 4) and "prevention through deterrence" (Doty, 2011, p. 599) has been a common feature of contemporary border politics (Fassin, 2012; Squire, 2017, p. 514). The more border crossers die and suffer en route to Europe -by being exposed to death, violence and the violence of abandonment (Davies & Isakjee, 2015, p. 93; Squire, 2017, p. 514)- the more others will be deterred to come to Europe. "Governing migration through death and biophysical violence" (Squire 2017, p. 517) has become the Janus-face of deterrence. Traces of deaths through remains of corpses (in whole or in parts) (De León, 2015, p. 25) washed ashore or being found, through the anonymous graves and massive tombs (Albahari, 2016; De León, 2015) along the multiple land and sea border pathways, are preemptive and deterrent "messages", being left for the ones who have not reached Europe yet. As Rita Segato (2014) observes, "corpses are being used as messages where the body is actually transmitting something the perpetrators want to say, show or enact" (in Délano, Domínguez Galbraith, & Nienass, 2016). Prevention and deterrence policies have resulted into the increased deaths at, within and beyond the borders. As Jason De León observes policy makers instead of calling their policies "killing", they call them instead "detering" (De León, 2015, p. 67). Border-related deaths are systematically presented by policy makers as unforeseen, "natural" events, random and unpreventable "accidents". However, as Vicky Squire argues border-related deaths should be seen, as "an operation of power that involves a particular way of killing those lives that are not deemed worthy of being sacrificed" (Squire, 2017, p. 514; see also Vaughan-Williams, 2015a, p. 47). Border crossers' lives which have been degraded and devaluated as "unworthy" and "bare lives" (Agamben, 1998) become individuals whose deaths "are deemed of little consequence" (Doty, 2011, p. 600). In this sense, nature and the geographic space plays a pivotal role in

the implementation of the violent deterrent policies by providing, as Doty argues, “moral alibi that enables the policy makers to deny responsibility for the deaths” (Doty, 2011, p. 599 see also Chapter 4/Section 4.1.3).

The “detering-killing” policies (De León, 2015, p. 67) surrounding the border regime which systematically and routinely expose border crossers’ lives to physical harms and death highlight “the lethal or thanatopolitical dimension of biopolitical governance” (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 47). Those physical harms are not random and unpredictable events but an outcome of a continuum of multiple, systematic and intentional prevention through “detering-killing” policies (see also Chapter 4). The biopolitical and thanatopolitical approaches, which draw on Michele Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, are very important in the understanding of the cotemporary practices of border management which allow or create the conditions, spaces and “juridical voids” of abandonment and death (Doty, 2011, p. 600; Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 47). Such approaches are also important in order, as Squire argues, “to understand how deaths that might be presented as ‘tragic accidents’ are better understood as an integral operation of power” (2017a, p. 517). Finally, such approaches contribute in the understanding of, in Vaughan-Williams words, “Why do European humanitarian border security practices often expose the very ‘irregular’ migrants they are supposed to protect to dehumanisation and death” (2015b, pp. 2–3). Foucault described as biopolitics the technology of power under which populations and life itself becomes the object of calculation, regulation, control and knowledge (Foucault, 2003, pp. 246–247). Biopolitics is a non-disciplinary power which seeks to intervene and take control of (biological) life itself through a set of processes and mechanisms in order to ensure regularization (*ibid.*, p. 247). In respect to the EU border regime and the regulation of the unauthorised border crossings, the biopolitical paradigm is enforced in practice through the militarisation and surveillance of borders and the deployment of militaristic surveillance technology, policing, prevention and preemption and migration governance through spatial and temporal border controls and humanitarian intervention (Section 4.1.2, see also Chapter 6). Humanitarian intervention, at and beyond the borders, is a form of biopolitical intervention. As Didier Fassin argues,

it uses techniques of the management of populations in setting up refugee camps, establishing aid corridors, making use of communication around public testimony to abuses perpetrated, and conducting epidemiological studies of infectious diseases, malnutrition, trauma, and even violations of the laws of war (2012, p. 226).

Furthermore, the biopolitical paradigm is enforced at the borders through the degradation of border crossers' lives either into "security risky lives" and, thus, a threat or "lives to be saved" (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 39). At the same time, their bodies, vulnerabilities and basic needs are targeted, intensively managed and regulated (*ibid.*). These processes ultimately produce segregations and hierarchies between lives which are "worthy" and "unworthy" to be protected, rescued and live. As Fassin argues, biopolitics "presupposes not only risking others but also selecting those who have priority for being saved" (Fassin, 2012, p. 226; see also Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 41). The enforcement of death and violence as a mode of deterring and governing the unauthorised human mobility is based on the existence of such "hierarchies of humanity" (Fassin, 2012, p. 239; see also Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 42; Squire, 201, p. 515). In order deaths, violence, inaction and abandonment of border crossers to be legitimised in the name of humanitarianism and security (Chapter 4) border crossers must be reduced as hierarchical "inferior" humans, risky, and threatening. According to Doty, "After the apparatus of security fabricate and organize a milieu- i.e., after physical barriers, increased numbers of border patrol agents, and high-tech surveillance are put in place- agents of security can just let things take their 'natural course'" (2011, p. 606). Such escalating deterring-killing policies demarcate the shift from the biopolitical borders to the thanatopolitical ones (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 48). The concept of thanatopolitical border is a term developed by Giorgio Agamben. It marks the practices of the exposure and abandonment to death "as integral to sovereign-biopolitics" (Squire, 2017). As already discussed in Chapter 4, Agamben has deployed the concept of "homo sacer" in order to define a life which "has been stripped of membership in society and thereby of his or her rights" (Khosravi, 2011, p. 3). When a life is reduced to bare life, it is easy to be exposed to death, be erased and effaced. This is how the thanatopolitical border regime operates. According to Mountz,

People on the move across borders with a desire to work and/or make a refugee claim in another state find themselves caught in between jurisdictions. Liminal spaces of enforcement include ambiguous locales such as stateless rooms in airports, dynamic zones of interdiction in the 'hot spots' where smugglers operate and remote sites of detention within and beyond sovereign territory. In these thresholds between sovereign and non-sovereign territory, asylum-seekers face legal ambiguities. A person might be en route from one country to another to make an asylum claim, but find herself detained in a third country in between that is not a signatory to the Convention, a site where she cannot make a claim (2011b, p. 385).

The thanatopolitical paradigm generates thresholds, liminal spaces and zones of ultimate abandonment and exception (Agamben, 1998; see also Chapter 4/ Section 4.2). In such thresholds the legal status of people is ambiguous, while their isolation and remoteness make them hidden from view. Within thresholds not only “violence passes over into law” (Agamben, 1998, p. 25) but it is normalised and routinised, and as such “death becomes a norm” (Squire, 2017, p. 514).

7.1.1 The Violence of Abandonment I: Thanatoharms

Through this lens, I call those particular harms, which are sheer products of the thanatopolitical border regime and inflict death, thanatoharms [from the Greek word “thanatos” (Θάνατος) which means death]. Thanatoharms ultimately cause death to border crossers and include the intentional inaction, indifference and violent abandonment through the following patterns. (i) The left-to-die abandonment practices (Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 47); (ii) Push-back operations (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, p. 45) and deaths “at the hands of the state” (Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 7) during search and rescue operations or while border crossers are crossing the liminal border spaces (see also Chapter 4); (iii) the violent abandonment to the forces of nature (De León, 2015; Doty, 2011; Squire, 2017). These are the most common types of thanatoharms which, additionally, are multilayered, overlapping, interact and intersect (Tombs, 2019).

7.1.1.1 Deaths through Left-to-die practices

The first type of thanatoharms are the left-to-die practices (Squire, 2017, p. 516; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, pp. 45–46), during which border crossers in distress are either intentionally ignored without a search and rescue operation to take place, or they are abandoned during rescue operations by the state officials in the middle of nowhere. A recent case of a left-to-die boat in the Aegean Sea was recorded on the 16th March 2018 near Agathonisi Island. In this incident 16 border crossers in distress, among them children, died due to Coast Guard’s inaction and delay in carrying out a search and rescue operation (WatchTheMed-Alarm Phone, 2018). According to the activist network WatchTheMed- Alarm Phone,

one of the relatives living in Samos Island knew that his loved ones were travelling in the fatal boat notified the authorities repeatedly, via phone and in person. At that point, many of the shipwrecked could have still been rescued. According to the survivors, they stayed afloat for several hours, waiting for help. But a Search and Rescue operation was launched only a day later, after local residents had discovered the first bodies, and they could recover merely more dead bodies (WatchTheMed-Alarm Phone, 2018).

The deliberate inaction of state officials to perform their duty of searching and rescuing people in distress is a systematic arbitrary practice which however consists of a crime of act and hence is a state crime (Weber & Pickering, 2011, pp. 83–84). Also, it violates the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS Convention) and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Papanicolopulu, 2016; SOLAS, 1974; UNCLOS, 1982; UNHCR, 2015b). Left-to-die practices highlight the culpability, contribution and complicity of state officials and border security agents to inflict intended harm, violence and death (Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 84). As activists have vividly noted,

[border crossers] are not the victims of a natural catastrophe; they are the dead of a border regime for which some are politically responsible. Simply said: if it had been possible for them to just buy a ferry ticket and to move wherever they wanted and needed to, they would certainly be still alive. All those for whom we grieve [...] lost their lives due to a senseless border regime (in Stierl, 2016, p. 179).

7.1.1.2 Deaths “at the hands of the state”

The second type of “thanatoharms” is inflicted when border crossers die at the hands of state officials’ (Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 7) while en route and when they traverse the various land and sea liminal border spaces and thresholds (Chapter 4/ Section 4.2). As already discussed in Chapter 4/Section 4.2 borders and borderzones due to the liminality and ambiguity they generate states of exclusion and exception, a juridical and spatial void where the rule of law is suspended (Agamben, 1998; Doty, 2011; Nordentoft Mose & Wriedt, 2015 see also Chapter 4/Section 4.2). Within this void, border crossers are violently abandoned to the mercy, brutality and extreme violence of state officials and eventually die at the hands of the state. There, there are no eyewitnesses to testify and the geographic space provides a moral alibi to state officials in obscuring, cloaking in silence any culpability by enjoying impunity for any violent (in)action and abuse of power which has inflicted death (Doty, 2011, p. 600). Very often the two types of thanatoharms intersect by combining left-to-die practices, violence and abuse of power by state officials during rescue operations, and push-backs. The Farmakonisi tragedy (Amnesty International, 2015c; Pro Asyl, 2016) where border crossers were physically abused by their rescuers and were left-to-die in a boat which was sinking is an indicative example. Additionally, the ones who survived were also victimised, blamed and shamed by the Greek authorities and the media for being culpable and responsible for their own deaths. As Miriam Ticktin argues,

deaths are blamed on migrants and their families; they are framed as responsible for making risky and dangerous choices (that is, crossing the desert), while the state represents itself as humanitarian by simply helping to bury the bodies after the fact (Ticktin, 2016, p. 261).

7.1.1.3 Deaths through the Violent Abandonment to the Forces of Nature

The third type of thanatoharms is the violence and harm of abandonment to the forces of nature which directly expose border crossers to death. As I described in the Vignette as well as on Chapter 4, border crossers are coerced due to the militarised border regime, the restrictive rules and deterrent policies to follow more risky and dangerous routes. The Mediterranean and Aegean Sea, Evros River at the land Greek-Turkish borders, the Sonoran desert between Mexico and the US are some of the deadliest sites (Albahari, 2015a, 2016; Squire, 2017, p. 514) and also symbols of the violence of abandonment, deterrence and the thanatopolitical border regime. In these sites border crossers experience abandonment to “the physical forces of deserts and seas” (Squire, 2017, p. 514) and exposure to drowning, fatal injuries, dangerous and lethal environmental conditions (such as very high or very low temperatures), starvation and dehydration, while crossing the mountains, lands, deserts and seas (Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 130). As De León emphasises, “Nature ‘civilizes’ the way the government deals with migrants; it does the dirty work” (2015, p. 68). In this respect, the significance of the geographical space and the environmental conditions are playing a significant role as an alibi for the enforcement of deterrence and the thanatopolitical border regime with impunity.

7.1.2 The Violence of Abandonment II: “Necroharmes”

Abandonment and inaction not only exist in the form of thanatoharms, meaning directly linked with deaths, which are products of the thanatopolitical border regime enforcements when border crossers are *en route* to Europe. Through my lived and first-hand experiences and positionalities (as activist, professional and researcher) in Lesvos and Greece I have eye witnessed and experienced the exemplifier of the violence and harm of abandonment and inaction through; (i) the management of death via specific bureaucratic procedures, separate from the other bureaucratic procedures which are implemented at and within the borders (i.e. registration, identification, asylum, see Chapter 5). Such bureaucracy is death related only and its existence is due to the thanatopolitical border regime which generates thanatos (death). That is why I call it thanatobureaucracy and it is inconsistent, chaotic, confusing and lengthy by inflicting more harm to survivors and the families of the deceased; (ii) the postmortem corporal mistreatment of the dead who are washed ashore or die within the refugee camps. The harm here is inflicted via the absence of burials,

religious rituals and memorialisation or the presence of undignified ones, resulting in the infliction of an enduring social injury and cultural harm, through shaming, dishonor, humiliation, pollution and dirt to the dead and the living (families and whole communities) (De León, 2015; Douglas, 2003; Tombs, 2019). All the aforementioned are a quiet, silent and thus indirect and invisible, routinised and normalised everyday violence, which “tortures” the living and shames the dignity of the dead and her/his community. In this precise moments is where thanatopolitics shift into necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003), while thanatoharms turn into what I call as necroharmes [from the Greek word *necros* (Νεκρός) which means dead]. Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics is crucial here since it highlights the shift from biopolitics to “a new paradigm in which life is subjugated to ‘the power of death’” (Mbembe, 2003, p. 39; Squire, 2017, p. 519). Through “necropolitics”, Mbembe focuses on the lives which are disposable or not (De León, 2015; Squire, 2017, p. 519). Necropolitics is not only linked with the outright death but defines the power of exposing entire populations through abandonment into a permanent condition of injury, pain and suffering, and into an “informal existence” through the denial of provision and care (Davies et al., 2017, pp. 1268, 1271). In this sense, contra to thanatoharms which directly expose border crossers to death, necroharmes expose border crossers in the enduring state of stuckedness (see Chapter 6) as neither dead nor alive, by being, as Mbembe argues, “kept alive but in a state of injury, in a phantom- like world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity” (2003, p. 21). Necroharmes directly expose border crossers to social death and the status of the living dead. As Vicky Squire argues,

Mbembe’s emphasis on ‘necropolitics’ involves the delineation of which lives are ‘disposable’ and which are not (cf. De León, 2015), with sovereign-biopower operating in necropolitical terms through taking on a distinctly colonial dimension whereby ‘entire populations’ become the focus of destruction and akin to the ‘living dead’ (Mbembe, 2003: 27–30). (Squire, 2017, p. 519)

Necroharmes tantamount to abandonment into social death and include the following multiple, interlinked forms of emotional and psychological, financial, and cultural harms (Copson, 2018; Dorling et al., 2008, p. 15; Tombs, 2019): (i) the experience of loss, pain, suffering, mourning and grief of the loved ones which is deteriorated due to slow, lengthy, chaotic and inconsistent and dysfunctional thanatobureaucratic procedures; (ii) the post-mortem corporeal mistreatment of the dead, which re-traumatises and protracts the pain and suffering of the living (family, community), due to the chaotic and dysfunctional thanatobureaucratic and identification procedures, the indifference, apathy, ignorance and inaction of the authorities; (iii) the absence of burials, rituals and memorialisation, or the

presence of inappropriate and undignified one, which prolongs pain, suffering to the living, and generates cultural harms in the form of shame, risk and pollution. Those are harms which are caused by the post-mortem corporeal mistreatment when cultural, religious, moral, sacred norms -which are closely linked with one's culture and identity- are violated, by inflicting humiliation, shame, insult, pollution and dirt (De León, 2015; Douglas, 2003) to the dead, the living and the whole community. Also, due to the absence or inappropriate religious ritual performance and undignified burials, both the dead and the living (family, community) are in a liminal state of temporal stuckedness and waiting between life and death.

7.1.2.1 Thanatobureaucracy and Necroharm

The memory of death of the 2012 shipwreck evoked multiple times when I was interviewing activists about border-related deaths. The ethical, political, bureaucratic and procedural issues (see Vignette) of then, I found in some extent being repeated and exist now (in 2017), by perpetuating the continuum and ritual of harm and violence in time and space. As I will show below, due to the ignorance, indifference and inaction on behalf of the local authorities, the burden of the management of death and corpses, the support of the survivors and relatives who were reaching Lesvos, was mainly at the hands of activists and volunteers. In the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis and the increased deaths in the Aegean Sea, activists and volunteers became experts by experience on the procedural and bureaucratic issues surrounding death. As *Ellie*, a long-term activist on Lesvos emphasised, "There is know-how now". After 2015, various International and Non-Governmental Organisations semi-settled on Lesvos and show an increased interest in getting involved in the managing of the macabre issue of death. According to *Ellie*, "From 2015 onwards, the UNHCR has started supervising the procedures in order to reassure that the process is done from somebody; the police, the hospital's social service or from other organisations". However, as *Ellie* noted by echoing most of the activists I interviewed, bureaucracy is the main problem which makes the situation difficult and the procedures long and slow. In *Ellie's* own words, "The system is very bureaucratic and managerial. It is all about bureaucratic management and that is why it fails so much."

The main problem surrounding the thanatobureaucratic management of the deceased being recovered –in whole or in parts- is that the main authority which is responsible for the whole processes is the Coastguard. The Coastguard is responsible for multiple and often contradictory tasks (Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016, p. 4). On one hand, the Coastguard is a repressive body whose task is to prevent, deter and arrest any unauthorised

border crossing as “illegal” according to the criminal law. On the other hand, the Coastguard is obliged to perform search and rescue operations of boatpeople in distress, and also recover the dead bodies and their remains from the sea and coasts. This contradictory task brings to the surface the contradiction and ambivalence between surveillance and policing of borders and humanitarian practices which are implemented at the same time (Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016, p. 4; see also Chapter 5/ Section 5.2). Being at the hands of a repressive body, the management of death and the identification procedures inflicted enormous emotional and psychological harms upon survivors of shipwrecks and their relatives. Due to the ignorance and apathy on behalf of the coastguards the identification procedures of the dead were taking place rashly. Most of the time there was no interpretation and support for the relatives, who in many cases were themselves survivors of the same shipwreck, and eye witnesses of the death of their loved ones. The authorities used to begin the identification procedures immediately after the dreadful event, without respecting or taking under consideration survivors and relatives’ pain and mourning. Meanwhile, survivors of shipwrecks are often held in the only formal facility provided by the state, which is the Moria hotspot where multiple forms of harm and everyday violence take place (Chapter 5). This fact inflicts additional emotional and psychological harm upon survivors. As *Martha*, an activist supporting survivors of shipwrecks and the relatives of the dead and missing people, argued,

The way the whole procedure is taking place is a huge form of violence. Imagine that survivors are often held inside Moria camp. It is an enormous violence because as I see it, losing your loved ones is a very traumatic experience per se and even within a very good context one can be emotionally torn apart. Imagine now someone in this psychological condition living inside Moria camp.

The violence and harms of abandonment, inaction, ignorance and apathy were combined with the institutional violence in the form of the absence of any standard procedure and clear framework which perpetuated a “policy vacuum” (Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016, p. 2). Such a policy vacuum allowed the existence of a Kafkaesque thanatobureaucratic context without a beginning, middle and end, by making *Ellie* pessimistically mumble, “You have your mourning and at the same time you have one million [bureaucratic] things which are impossible to be done”. Due to my first hand lived experiences of the time I was living and working in Lesvos, I could empathise with *Ellie’s*, *Martha’s* and the other activists’ and volunteers’ agonising struggle and pain. Not only border crossers had to endure an endless bureaucratic registration, identification and

asylum procedure (Chapter 5) but even in death and mourning they were confronted with a thanatobureaucratic border regime. Even in mourning and death border crossers were experiencing a protracted displacement and limbo, since similarly to other bureaucratic procedures discussed in Chapter 5 they had to navigate through different, inconsistent and parallel thanatobureaucratic procedures. There were different procedures implemented in case a dead body was recovered and different procedures in case the body was not recovered. There were different procedures in case there were relatives and/or survivors who could identify the bodies and other procedures if the bodies were unidentified. There were different procedures again in case border crossers were missing and other procedures in case pieces of the dead were recovered. As *Martha* told me,

Sometimes procedures are done and some other times they do not because there is not any standard procedure. There are no standard things, no guidelines that one can follow. Thus, from the one Port Police to the other and even from staff to staff there is a different administering of the procedures, and the one person says something, whilst the other person says something different. The whole problem has to do with ignorance and bureaucracy. Many of the staff who is managing deaths now had never done this before and so they are advised from people who have never done this before as well.

Listening to *Martha's* narration the traumatic memory of the relatives of the dead during the shipwreck of December 2012 re-evoked again. I remembered how agonizing it was witnessing them standing all alone outside of the Alien's Bureau in Mytilene being ignored by the police officers working there. Not only did the relatives have to endure the loss of their loved ones they were also confronted with the apathy and inaction of the local authorities. The scene of the relatives silently mourning outside of the Alien's Bureau and the police officers who were inside their offices but they were neither urging the relatives to stay nor to go, and also they were not advising them what to do, is imprinted in my memory and has deeply traumatised me. The relatives' existence was just ignored by being left to remain standing outside in the dark and cold hall of the Alien's Bureau. The relatives were "abandoned to informal existence" (Davies et al., 2017, p. 1271) by experiencing disdain and ultimate dehumanization. They did not count for the authorities by also being denied any provision, support and information, although as Delano *et al.* note that the relatives of the dead and missing border crossers count as victims of torture (Délano et al., 2016, p. 532) by also being eligible for re-habilitation, damages (*ibid.*, p. 520).

Almost five years after the shipwreck of 2012, the relatives of the dead border crossers were experiencing the same abandonment to informal existences and dehumanisation, (mis)treatment, humiliation and institutional violence by the local authorities, by being “left to suffer in agonizing circumstances that are normalised through the law” (Gilbert & Ponder, 2014, p. 407) and/or through the deliberate inaction and violation of the law. As *Ellie* denoted several times during her interview,

The collaboration with the authorities is very difficult. Often, the relatives who will contact the authorities on their own will be ignored and send away. If the relatives will not be able to identify the dead from the existing evidences [photos, clothes, other personal belongings] they will be ignored and send away by the authorities. They will not be explained that they must complete a “missing person’s declaration”, that they must give a DNA sample, that all the Greek authorities must be informed and some supplementary information must be given on the temporal period of death. They [the authorities] will send them away without showing them enough evidences [during the process of identification]. Or they will do it in a rush manner. They are indifferent.

In most of the cases identification was not successful due to the lack of evidence, the decomposition of the bodies or the remains recovered as well as the expensive and time-consuming processes in finding and bringing the relatives for identification (Singleton et al., 2017, p. 7). The medical forensic examiner during the interview also told me that there is also a delay in the identification of the dead through the DNA samples who are sent via the Greek authorities to other countries. As the coroner noted,

In countries like Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia where there is war and conflicts it is very hard to have a contact with the embassies there, in order for the DNA samples to be sent and thus to receive an answer. For this reason the identification procedures can be delayed or being impossible to take place in the first place.

In this respect, border crossers are trapped in a state of stuckedness and waiting. Thus, death management as well, through thanatobureaucracy, generates temporal stuckedness, liminality, ambiguity, in-between-ness. In this perspective, stuckedness through abandonment plays again a crucial role in the management, discipline and regulation of the undesirable populations. It is a part of the temporal borders and border controls enforced through death and thanatobureaucracy in order to make people suffer even in death. This is a form of state violence.

7.1.2.2 Burials, Funeral, Rituals

Due to the limited refrigerator facilities operating at the morgue the dead bodies cannot be stored for a long time (Kovras & Robins, 2017, p. 165; Singleton et al., 2017, p. 7). Often, when the relatives are traced and reach Lesvos they are arriving too late, when the burial has already taken place and the dead border crossers have been buried as “unidentified” or “unknown”. This is one of the most devastating, violent and harmful aspects concerning border related deaths; the people who are buried as “unidentified” as well as the people who are declared as “missing”. Due to the inconsistency, the long and slow thanatobureaucratic procedures, the policy vacuum surrounding the procedures (Section 7.2.1.2) and the overall lack of information, the quest of tracing the truth for the destiny of border crossers on behalf of the relatives becomes agonizing but mainly impossible. Relatives are reaching the Greek islands by being informed or misinformed by the smugglers, who take advantage of the system’s gaps and inconsistency and make profit at the relatives’ expense. As Kovras and Robins argue, “Smugglers are usually the first to know about a shipwreck and to inform the families of those affected” (2017, p. 166). Misinformed or deceived relatives are wandering around, from island to island and from port police to port police station seeking for their loved ones within photos, clothes, shoes, personal belongings, marks on the skins, and tattoos. As De León emphasises, “Bare life has been reduced to shoes, shards of bone, and the ‘Unknown’” (2015, p. 29). This quest is psychologically and mentally violent and tortures the living, especially in case when relatives have managed to detect their dead relative but when they are doing so it is too late. Their loved ones are already buried as “unidentified” or “anonymous”. The lack of consistency of post-mortem data, other relevant information, a map and a record of where and who is in the graves within the cemetery prevent the relatives from even finding the grave, exhume and repatriate the dead body (Kovras & Robins, 2017; Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016). This situation inflicts even more necroharm (psychological, emotional and cultural). It also illustrates the “post-mortem precarisation” (Stefatos et al., 2015, p. 14) of both the dead and the living. According to *Anna* an activist supporting shipwreck survivors and the relatives,

The whole process causes a lot of suffering and discomfort, and there is a chance that the relatives who are not in Lesvos, might never be able to identify the body. Thus, the body will be buried as “unknown”. There are many problems and it is time-consuming to repatriate the dead bodies. It is too time-consuming and expensive. Sometimes the process is absurd. We had a case of a Syrian man who recently passed away and whose brother

came from an EU country to repatriate the body. Although, the man was an EU citizen and obtained documentations when he arrived on Lesbos Frontex destroyed his papers by doubting their originality. So, the man was detained inside Moria camp. If we have not had assisted him this person would not be able to do the process on his own. It is a crazy procedure.

The funeral rituals and burial procedures implemented in Lesbos inflict multiple and multilayered forms of *necroharm*s to the dead and the living. Due to the *policy vacuum* surrounding burials, the cemetery and the rituals (Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016, p. 7) dignified burials for border crossers cannot be guaranteed. Until 2015, dead border crossers were buried within an old Christian Orthodox cemetery but, as the border related deaths started increasing, there was a lack of space inside the old cemetery (see Vignette). The new cemetery which is used until now is an allotment rented by the Municipality and managed by activists, and volunteers border crossers who also play the role of the imams. Both the cemetery and the imams are attributes not formally given, since the “new” cemetery is operating without any legal license and is temporal, whilst the imams are two volunteers border crossers who have become experts by experience in performing the religious rites and rituals. Due to ignorance and indifference on behalf of the authorities, the death rituals were not properly taking place. As *Inam*, one volunteer observes,

I have started doing the religious rituals since March 2015, when I first came in Lesbos and after I heard about a fatal shipwreck. I went to the funeral for the first time as a visitor. The situation I encountered was that there was no any ritual from Islam applied, the people who were burying the dead were just taking the dead bodies from the hospital and were just throwing them inside a dip, and that was all.

Tariq another volunteer in the cemetery told me,

When funerals were taking place inside the old cemetery in Aghios Panteleimon, no one really knew what to do. We were praying for the dead, but we were not following the ritual protocol. According to the protocol we must clean the dead body first and put her/him inside a clean white bed sheet before burring. Most of the times, we used the same bed sheet from the hospital, which could be dirty with blood, and then Municipality’s workers were placing the dead inside the grave, and they were just throwing soil above them.

The religious protocol and rituals which included cleaning and caring for the dead body before it is buried, the position of the body within the grave and the direction of the grave at a certain way (Kovras & Robins, 2017; Stefatos et al., 2015) were taking place inappropriately, in such extend, that was offensive, sacrilegious, inhumane and undignified

(De León, 2015, p. 69). Necroharmes have also the attribute of being a form of post-mortem violence which, as De León emphasises, “is aimed at the victim’s spirit, soul or after-life” (De León, 2015, p. 70)

7.1.2.3 Missing and Unidentified People

The violence and harms of deliberate abandonment and inaction (Davies et al., 2017; Davies & Isakjee, 2015) expose the dead and the living to the state of the “living dead” and “social death”. This is vividly exemplified in the figure of the “missing person” and the absence of burial rituals. Border crossers, who are declared as missing and whose bodies are never recovered, are another devastating aspect and consequence of the thanatopolitical border regime. The case of missing and unidentified border crossers is a very indicative example of necroharmes. Missing and unidentified border crossers are in a state of enduring liminality, ambiguity and temporal stuckedness as neither dead nor alive. They are condemned in a temporal stuckedness between life and death as living dead (Davies et al., 2017; Davies & Isakjee, 2015). The missing and unidentified border crossers due to the fact that are not found, they cannot be buried, mourned and grieved as dead. The relatives are condemned living both with hope and abjection, which the absence-presence of the missing and unidentified generates. This temporal stuckedness of the absence- presence of missing and unidentified persons is reflected on Robert Hertz’s (1907) concept of the “unquiet dead”; a soul which can never rest and is condemned “forever impinging on the land of the living” (Taussig, 1992, p. 48). As Geoffrey Boyce argues, “Disappearance produces a condition of uncertainty and liminality- an undocumented individual subjected to an undocumented death- such that this death not only fails to count as a crime, but even to count as death” (2012, p. 77)

Missing and unidentified people stuck indefinitely within a liminal threshold between life and death. They are captured in an enduring temporal stuckedness and marginalization by also trapping their relatives with them. Missing people cannot be grieved and buried, but they cannot also give relief to the living, who are condemned to a protracted waiting, hoping and questing of the traces of their loved ones (Laczko et al., 2017). In a sense, not only the dead but also the living are trapped into a protracted displacement. Missing people’s relatives also become “living dead” and experience “social death”. If one is not exactly dead, then the relatives cannot perform the death rituals and a dignified burial. Religious and cultural beliefs around risk, dirt, pollution, impurity and danger (Douglas, 2003) are coming into the surface. The absence of rituals surrounding death symbolizes a danger and the disruption of order. According to Mary Douglas,

Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is indefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others. The danger is controlled by ritual which precisely separates him from his old status, segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry to his new status (2003, p. 2)

The absence of rituals generates liminality, marginalisation to the whole community. According to Mary Douglas, “This ritual play on articulate and inarticulate forms is crucial to understanding pollution”. *Inam* a volunteer assisting with the death rituals on Lesbos during his interview spoke about pollution and danger in the form of “sin”. As he argued, the “sin” burdens the living, and at the same time shames and pollutes border crossers’ community. This is how powerful and important rituals are. According to *Inam*,

It is a sin for us and not for the dead. It is a sin for us who are alive, and we are here. It is a sin for all the Muslims who know about another Muslim’s death and do not pray and do the rituals. Everyone living who is aware of the death must take the responsibility. But the dead person even if s/he is thrown to the sea or a mountain, is eaten by animals there is no sin on her/him. The responsibility and the sin is distributed to the living ones, to those who knew about the death and did not do a ritual. But if someone does this (the ritual), the sin eclipses from all. This is an obligation which must be taken by one person. If one person takes this responsibility, then the sin diminishes for all. If no one takes the responsibility, then all Muslims carry the sin. And when we say the whole Muslims then we mean the Muslims from the whole world.

Consequently, the “rite of passage” from the world of the living to the world of the dead cannot be fulfilled and disorder is produced. Similarly, the rite of passage from mourning to closure cannot be fulfilled, and relatives are trapped in a protracted temporal stuckness and “ambiguous loss”; an unresolved grief and loss that remains unclear (Boss, 2010; De León, 2015, p. 71; Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016). According to Pauline Boss, “(...) because the lost person is here, but not here, grief is frozen, life is put on hold, and people are traumatised. With no official verification of death, no possibility of closure, and no rituals for support, there is no resolution of grief” (2010, p. 137). This form of necroharm is paralysing and without an end (De León, 2015, p. 71; Délano et al., 2016, p. 518). The absence of the dead body condemns the relatives into a prolonged, eternal mourning, and a permanent state of limbo by preventing them to move on with their lives (Délano et al., 2016, p. 521; Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016, p. 6). “Families suffer from ambiguous loss: a traumatic loss that gives rise to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and family conflict. Ambiguous loss is the most stressful type of loss precisely because it is

unresolved” (Boss, 2010; Mediterranean Missing Project, 2016, p. 3). Ambiguous loss and unresolved grief only ends with the act of memorialisation through burial and religious rituals. As *Inam* denotes, “What we say is that this human thing [burial] is the least that should exist when one dies, even if one is a Muslim, Christian, Jewish. This person must be buried with the specific way that this person believes in. This is the minimum of the rights that one has; that is to be buried”.

7.2 The Long Lists of Thanatopolitics: Recording, Counting and Memorialising Deaths

The activist network UNITED (2017) has developed a long list of documented border crossers’ deaths from the early 1990’s until June 2017. Within this list dead border crossers are recorded by their name, age, country of origin and also the cause of their death. Similarly, UNITED has developed a live map recording the collateral casualties in deaths of people seeking safety within fortress Europe (themigrantsfiles & UNITED, n.d.). Attempts of counting border crossers deaths, border-related accidents and other tragic events *en route* to Europe have been attempted from various NGOs, activists networks and academics (Weber & Pickering, 2011, pp. 38–41). Advocates Abroad have been producing a Timeline of Tragedies in the Greek islands by documenting fatal events⁶. IOM has developed the Missing Migrants Project by recording the dead and the missing border crossers too. All these attempts demonstrate the need for “bringing the dead back into society” (Délano et al., 2016; Délano & Nienass, 2016a) by making deaths knowable, visible and recordable. Furthermore, these attempts highlight the issue of dignity (Squire, 2017) and protection of the human rights of the dead as well as the acknowledgment of lives worth being grieved and mourned (Butler, 2004, 2009; Weber & Pickering, 2011, p. 6). The acknowledgment of border crossers’ lives through the acknowledgment of their death is an active stance against dehumanisation and anonymisation through the process of rehumanisation (Squire, 2014). As Brian and Lacko argue,

A further tragedy, and one that is even less acknowledged than the terrible loss of life, is the fact that many of the dead remain nameless. Each body that is unidentified or that is never even recovered, signifies a missing person for their family. Caught in limbo between grief and hope, families begin a search for knowledge of their loved one that can take years or a lifetime (2016, p. vii).

⁶ At my disposal by the authors.

At the same time, activists and scholars highlight that memorializing, recording and counting deaths is very important since it is linked with accountability, responsibility and culpability of those deaths. Counting border-related deaths spreads light of who bears responsibility for them (Délano & Nienass, 2016a; Tazzioli, 2015; Weber & Pickering, 2011, pp. 36–41, 83). Leanne Weber and Sharon Pickering argue that “people die because of the ways in which the borders between the Global North and the Global South are controlled. These deaths are often foreseeable and can occur by deliberate act of omission” (2011, p. 1). In this sense, border-related deaths are an outcome of the *thanatopolitical* governance of the unwanted human mobility; that is to say, “governing migration through death” and (biophysical) violence (Squire, 2017, p. 514). Thus, the data and numbers which are encompassed within “the hopelessly incomplete lists of dead or disappeared migrants” (Pérez, 2015 in Délano & Nienass, 2016b, p. xxii), which scholars and activists are producing, are the collateral casualties in human cost of the thanatopolitical border regime. From this angle, those lists are in practice the long lists of thanatopolitics. Those long lists of thanatopolitics and the agonizing struggles of activists in memorializing, recording and counting should not been seen, Miriam Ticktin (2016) urges us, as only acts of compassion. They should be seen instead as constant attempts of making visible the invisible and as reminders. In Ticktin’s words,

activism that focuses on making bodies and unmarked graves visible to a wider audience function not to contain grief or to give it closure but rather to keep the dead in our world, to expand our frame of visibility. In this way, the specter of the dead, which increases in size each day, forces a reckoning with the larger political structures of violence and exclusion that have caused these deaths. (...) The idea is to render it impossible to escape these bodies—to have their images haunt us, acting as witnesses, and demanding justice (Ticktin, 2016, p. 268).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that border-related deaths are not unforeseen, unpredictable and random accidents but on the contrary they are an outcome of the *thanatopolitical* border regime; a complex series of political decisions, deterrent enforcements, actions and inactions which aimed in governing unwanted human mobility through death, violence and abandonment (Davies et al., 2017; Squire, 2017). The governing of unwanted human mobility through violence and death has inflicted multiple layered and overlapping forms of harm, which as I argued they are distinguished between thanatoharms and necroharm. Thanatoharms are directly linked with the border practices and the thanatopolitical border

regime, which expose border crossers to ultimate death through abandonment, inaction and indifference (Davies et al., 2017, p. 1274). I distinguished three main types of thanatoharms; (i) abandonment and death through left-to-die practices; (ii) death from state's in/actions or at the hands of the state; (iii) death through abandonment to the physical forces of desert and sea. I also argued that thanatoharms, through various processes enabled and enforced when dead bodies are washed ashore at the EU frontiers, are turned into necroharmes. Necroharmes include overlapping and layered forms of emotional, psychological and cultural harms which are inflicted via the death-related bureaucracy (thanatobureaucracy), the apathy, ignorance and inaction of the state to provide care and support to survivors and relatives, the undignified, dehumanising or non-existent burials, memorialisation and rituals. Necroharmes expose border crossers –the dead, the living and whole communities- into disposable lives and in a state of temporal stuckness with the status of the living dead.

In the next Chapter I will refer to the conclusions of this thesis.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

In this thesis I have tried to shed light upon and answer four interrelated research questions: *What are the forms of border harms and everyday violence border crossers experience at, within and beyond the borders? How border crossers' experience everyday harm and violence on Lesbos? Why is not the everyday violence that border crossers experience more widely recognised and denounced by local and international observers/citizens/stakeholders? How violence and social harm border crossers experience render invisible?*

Having Lesbos Island as a case study I have attempted to respond to both research questions by focusing on the ongoing refugee crisis and the overwhelming coerced displacement of border crossers since World War II. I specifically focused on the “crisis” discourses, which were representing the increased influx of people to Europe, the suffering and deaths as a “state of exception” (Agamben, 2005), random, unpredictable events or accidents (Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b; Weber & Pickering, 2011). I argued that the state of emergency and exception discourses immobilised, oxymoronic interstate militarised and humanitarian enforcements towards the increased influx of people in Greece and Lesbos, at the external EU borders (Chapters 1 and 4). As I demonstrated, the state of emergency and exception were materialised through an overwhelming border, asylum and (thanato)bureaucratic regime which, instead of protecting border crossers, inflicted upon them more harm, suffering and (social) death.

Throughout the whole thesis, the term refugee crisis has been challenged – notably because it is not exceptional, unforeseen or random, but on the contrary it is an outcome of a continuum of political decisions and enforced policies which are escalating, since the 1985 Schengen Agreement (Vaughan-Williams, 2015b, pp. 17, 21). Additionally, as I have also demonstrated throughout this thesis, Greece has been an important entry point for unauthorised border crossers since the 1990s. Although the mainstream discourses of EU policy makers and the media tend to highlight the death of Alan Kurdi (in 2015 onwards) as the beginning of the so-called refugee crisis, the historical and sociopolitical background of Lesbos Island indicates multiple border crossings, violence and suffering in time and

space even before the 1990s (Chapter 3). Moreover, such mainstream discourses tend to represent as crisis and exceptional the degrading, humiliating, dehumanising, abject and appalling living conditions within the camps, in borderlands like Lesbos. However, as I have shown throughout this thesis the degrading and structurally violent living conditions, within which border crossers are exposed to additional forms of violence and harm, are not accidents produced by the refugee crisis. These are intentional systematic practices enforced since the 1990s in Greece in order to make border crossers' lives unlivable and to deter them from staying or moving forward to Northern Europe. Therefore, throughout this thesis I have shown the continuum of institutional and structural violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004) of the politics of deterrence and the border regime in time and space (Hess & Kasparek, 2017; Iliadou, 2019; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b). Moreover, I have presented the systematic abuse of the crisis discourses and events on behalf of the EU policy makers (and the mass media) by constructing a "theatrical" border spectacle (Gillespie, 2018) full of violence, suffering, misery and death. The abuse of the crisis discourses and events served EU (and non-EU) policy makers in order to legitimise and enforce extreme, exceptional and emergency measures and deterrence policies at, within and beyond the borders, which as my research indicates, are violating human rights, liberties, the 1951 Convention, and are culpable for the social harm and deaths border crossers experience up to the present day. Additionally, the abuse of the crisis discourse served in blurring EU and non-EU states' culpability, negligence, acts of commissions and omissions, and responsibility for the border related harms, violence, suffering and deaths (Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b; Weber & Pickering, 2011). In doing so, it distracted the attention from EU states' practices, policies, decisions and crimes, to the "victimisation" of border crossers by the "criminal" trafficking/smuggling networks (Chapter 4 and 7). The monolithic border regime enforcements at, within and even beyond the external EU borders, are deliberately implemented in order to preemptively deter border crossers from arriving with the logic that border crossers are better protected by being deterred from taking the journey in the first place (Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a, p. 149). Throughout this thesis I have critically examined the politics of deterrence and explored the harms it has inflicted upon border crossers in various phases of their long journeys. Below I address the literature gap, the key insights and findings of this thesis and the recommendations.

8.1 Key Insights and Findings

In this section I will refer to the key insights and findings of my research.

Firstly, a key insight I have stressed is that the politics of closed borders and deterrence, which were strengthened and proliferated as a response to the “refugee crisis”, has produced multiple forms of harms and violence to border crossers while *en route* and, also, within and beyond borders zones. In this respect, I argued that; i) borders function as “thresholds” or “zones of exception” and “liminality” (Agamben, 1998, 2005; see also De León, 2015; Doty, 2011; Mountz, 2011b). Inside border zones, lives are reduced to “bare lives” (Agamben, 1998), while the law is suspended by creating a “juridical void” which permits abuses and killings without punishment (Agamben, 1998; see also De León, 2015; Doty, 2011, p. 602). As my research findings indicate border crossers *en route*, and also within border zones can easily be exposed to bare life and experience physical harms and death; ii) borders and thresholds, as zones of exception, abandonment and liminality where law is suspended, are operating as moral alibi for the denial of any state responsibility for border-related deaths, violence and harms (De León, 2015; Doty, 2011). Within these zones of exception, physical harms and deaths become normalised (Squire, 2017); iii) without having any other option for safe passages to Europe (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016, p. 316), border crossers are coerced to turn to the trafficking and smuggling networks and are thus being exposed to multiple and multilayered border harms, trafficking and violence. I have introduced here the concept of “coerced choices” in order to highlight the oxymoronic coexistence of agency, autonomy, extortion and coercion which formulate in some extend border crossers’ choices and I emphasised the role of various forms of debt in financing the unauthorised crossings (O’Connell Davidson, 2013). I have argued that in the absence of any alternative option of a safe passage (Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016, p. 316; Médecins Sans Frontières, 2015), border crossers’ are coerced to choose between “the devil and the deep blue sea”. Through this lens, I documented dominant forms of harm and violence which are underdeveloped in the academic literature, notably the role of debt and extortion as a means for border crossers to finance their unauthorised border crossing (O’Connell Davidson, 2013). I distinguished three dominant as well as a less prevalent form forms of debt; “financial”, “labour” and “sexual” debt, and “organ” debt. As my research findings indicate, border crossers are extorted and coerced to transact labour, sexual or other financial services with their traffickers/smugglers, border guards and other intermediates in order to be allowed to travel to Europe. These are forms of border harms which are fostered, generated and

proliferated due to the politics of deterrence, closed borders and the EU border regime. Those harms are avoidable since trafficking/smuggling networks would not exist if there was no border regime and if there were safe passages which lead to Europe.

Second, not only are border crossers confronted with multiple forms of militarised borders before they even reach Europe, but even when they reach Europe, as the Lesvos case shows, they are confronted with a Kafkaesque militarised, securitised, bureaucratised complex which regulates their everyday lives, and which is produced by the internalisation policies being enforced parallel to the externalisation (Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Iliadou, 2017; Ruhrmann & FitzGerald, 2016). The bureaucratic and asylum regime includes the reception, registration, identification and asylum procedures implemented after the EU border is crossed, upon arrival to Lesvos. One very important finding here is that the overwhelmingly slow, lengthy, inconsistent, confusing, chaotic bureaucratic procedures were mentally exhausting and exacerbated existing harms while inflicting new ones. A second important finding is that these procedures were intentionally designed to be chaotic, lengthy and inconsistent in order always to fail by inflicting harm, despair and enduring fear. Also, in order to generate the feeling of a dead end- process; meaning that entering the procedures would not necessarily mean exiting them. The procedures were, as I found, without a beginning, middle and end. Through this lens, I developed the idea of “bureaucratic deterrence”, which I defined as an intentional, well-designed policy of deterring by gradually, slowly and silently killing those who have sought international protection in Europe. I emphasised that the bureaucratic borders and bureaucratic deterrence were so harmful that deterred and indirectly coerced border crossers to withdraw their asylum claims, and either undertake alternative dangerous illicit migratory pathways to other European countries or “voluntarily” return to the countries of origin. An additional key insight that I stressed in respect to the bureaucratic deterrence is the conditions under which border crossers wait (Auyero, 2011; Hage, 2009a) in order to complete the bureaucratic procedures. As my research indicates, border crossers wait in appalling, degrading, humiliating and harmful reception and living conditions and, due to destitution, hyperprecarisation are coerced in doing unspeakable/harmful things in order to survive, including survival sex, unwanted pregnancies, forced marriages and smuggling (Chapters 5 and 6). Through the lens of deterrence and the dogma of “making their lives unlivable” (Fili, 2016), I found that border crossers are abandoned to structurally violent and life-threatening conditions inside Moria hotspot in order to be mentally and physically exhausted and deterred from staying or moving forward to Europe. Due to deprivation of their dignity and loss of hope I found border crossers acted on what I called as “despair”

harms. This type of harms is very common within detention centres and camps. The concept of despair harms, which I introduced and developed in Chapter 5/Section 5.5.4 includes two forms of actions. (i) Hunger strikes and starvation, self-harms or suicide attempts, in which people engage as a form of resistance, pressure, reaction and protest. I name these actions despair harms because they are a form of a non-violent violence. They might be non-violent acts against others, but they can cause harm and even death directly to the persons who perform them, and (ii) Furthermore, despair harms also include violent actions like riots, causing damage and setting fires inside camps. These despair harms; (i) include both reactions of border crossers who are deprived of hope and dignity in Moria camp, by experiencing ultimate dehumanisation and degradation, and reactions against the state violence to which they have been repeatedly exposed (Chapter 5), including the violence of inaction and abandonment (Davies et al., 2017) for months and years in humiliating, degrading and appalling conditions. These kinds of despair harms have their logic in one of my interviewee's words, "violence as a reaction to violence... violence against violence" (section 5.5.4). As contradictory as it may seem, despair harms are the ultimate form of resistance. Despair harms are a new type of harms I am developing in order to understand the range of harm and violence border crossers experience.

Third, another key insight that I have stressed in this thesis is the role that time and waiting plays in the border crossing process. I have particularly focused on the existence of temporal borders and controls (Agier, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018) which encircle border crossers' lives, and I have deployed the concept of "confinement beyond detention" (Mountz, 2011a; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018) in order to understand the range of harm and violence border crossers experience in relation to time. As my research findings indicate there are multiple forms of confinement beyond detention and "the institutional borders of the camps" (Mountz, 2012; Tazzioli, 2017; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). As the Lesbos case shows, after the EU-Turkey Statement and the geographical restriction regime the island has been metamorphosed into a spatial and temporal confinement and limbo where instead of walls and iron bars there is the deep blue sea. The metaphor of Lesbos as the "Prison Island", which border crossers use, is the ultimate manifestation of the spatial and temporal confinement beyond detention. This key insight is an important research finding and contribution to the academic research and literature which focuses on the temporality of migration controls and on under-recognised, under-researched aspects and consequences of confinement beyond the camps and hotspots (Andersson, 2014b, 2014a; Canning, 2017; Griffiths & Griffiths, 2016; Griffiths et al., 2013; Mountz, 2011b; Tazzioli, 2018; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018; Turnbull, 2016). In this context, I documented and developed the

infliction of harm within the spatial and temporal confinement beyond detention, inside the Prison Island. I have demonstrated that harm is inflicted upon border crossers through the everyday practices of spatial and temporal controls, policing, law enforcement, discipline and violence by the Greek authorities, the police, the municipality and even the local community (Mountz, 2011b; Tazzioli, 2018; Tazzioli & Garelli, 2018). Another key insight I have also addressed in this thesis is the lived experience of time and waiting (Haas, 2017; Hasselberg, 2016; Khosravi, 2014, 2018b, 2018c, 2018a) beyond the hotspot and the camp, within Lesvos. My research findings indicate that time and waiting – temporality- in the form of “stuckedness” is implicated with multilayered ways in the governance of migration and is a fundamental feature of the border regime (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018). This finding made me address the issue of the violence of time, stuckedness and waiting as a form of state violence (Iliadou, 2017, 2018). Time and waiting as state violence is hitherto under-recognised. From this angle, I approached time and waiting; (i) as a border technique and a mode of governing of the unauthorised border crossers (Andersson, 2014b; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Tazzioli, 2018) which is enforced as part of the politics of deterrence in order to make people suffer and endure until they are mentally and physically exhausted and deterred from staying or moving further to Northern Europe; (ii) as “stolen time” which is also embodied and existentially experienced through the form of existential inertia, immobility or limbo which spends and wastes border crossers’ lives and dreams and inflicts harms (Andersson, 2014b; Canning, 2017; Haas, 2017; Iliadou, 2017, 2018; Jefferson et al., 2018; Khosravi, 2014, 2018c; Mountz, 2011b; Mountz et al., 2002). I introduced the concept of “the violence of stuckedness and waiting” (Iliadou, 2017, 2018) in order to define a more latent and stealthy form of state violence which is intentionally enforced upon border crossers, confining them into an existential inertia, immobility, spatial and temporal stuckedness inside and beyond the institutional walls of the camp.

Fourth, a key insight that I have stressed in this thesis is the politics of governing unwanted human mobility through death and violence (De León, 2015; Doty, 2011; Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b). As my research indicates EU policy makers - in order to prevent and deter border crossers reaching Europe - deploy the politics of death and violence as the Janus-face of deterrence. From this perspective, EU policy makers in order to deter border crossers to reach Europe through the militarisation and securitisation of borders create thresholds of liminality which allow or foster death via left-to-die practices, abandonment, inaction and indifference (De León, 2015; Doty, 2011; Jones, 2016; Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b). The logic here is that the more border crossers die *en*

route, then the more likely that the others will “get” the message and be deterred from undertaking the journey in the first place (Doty, 2011; Triandafyllidou & Dimitriadi, 2014a). As I have shown in this thesis, policy makers call their policies “detering” instead of “killing” (De León, 2015). Deterrence through death has inflicted multiple, multilayered and overlapping forms of harm. I developed two new interlinked types of harm which are also related with the concepts and processes of “thanatopolitics” and “necropolitics” (Agamben, 1998; Foucault, 2003; Mbembe, 2003). I have called these new types of harm as “thanatoharms” and “necroharm”. Thanatoharms are mainly linked with the thanatopolitical border regime and the growing governing of the unauthorised border crossings through exposure and abandonment to physical death. Necroharm are harms which are related to inaction, indifference, abandonment in a state of liminal existence and permanent injury by exposing border crossers to social death.

Overall, my aim in this thesis has been to explore the extent to which border harms, everyday violence and border-related deaths are not unforeseen, unpredictable and random accidents but on the contrary they are an outcome of political decisions (De León, 2015; Squire, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b; Weber & Pickering, 2011). From this angle, throughout this thesis I have argued that “what it has become for me an intense lived experience and realisation through the passage of time for more than a decade on Lesbos is that for the obscene and apathetic technocrats-policy makers (in local and European level) the only border crossers who are welcome are the ones who never reach Europe” (Iliadou, 2017). Through the case of Lesbos, I have explored the range of harm and violence and focused on the academic body of work which challenges the crisis discourses and EU states’ responses in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis. I argue that this is not a *crisis* but the avoidable institutional violence of the thanatopolitical EU border regime. I have tried to show this through a detailed account of the history, genealogy, rituals and continuums of violence in time and space (Antonakaki et al., 2016; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Jeandesboz & Pallister-Wilkins, 2016; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b) of; (i) the EU Border Regime (i.e. the politics of closed borders, deterrence, externalisation and internalisation); (ii) inconsistency, uncertainty and chaos of the bureaucratic and asylum regime (i.e. identification, registration, bureaucratic and asylum procedures) in Greece and Lesbos; (iii) the structural violence and harms due to the degrading, humiliating and appalling reception and living conditions within the hotspots and refugee camps; (iv) the thanatopolitical and necropolitical enforcements.

I have advanced my argument firstly, by bringing together Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillip Bourgois concept of “continuum of violence” or “violence continuum” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004), and “everyday violence” (Scheper-Hughes, 1997). Drawing on these concepts I introduced the concept of “continuum of violence in time and space” (Chapter 3) in relation to refugee crisis, border related harms, structural violence and everyday violence border crossers experience in Lesvos. Through the lens of continuum of violence in time and space I argued that the multiple forms of violence, suffering, harm and death, border crossers experience *en route*, within or beyond the EU borders, are not new, post-refugee crisis phenomena. On the contrary, these are phenomena which have been unfolding and enforced as a continuum both in time (historical, past, present and future) and space over the last three decades. I thus focused on genealogies and continuities, rituals and routines, continuums of structural and institutional violence. Additionally, I have further developed my arguments in relation to the academic body of work which is concerned with spaces and experiences of incarceration beyond detention. In order to do so I have documented and analysed the range and multiple forms of violence and harms border crossers experience inside detention (Chapter 5 and 6). In Chapter 6, I developed the notion of confinement beyond detention (Mountz, 2011b; Tazzioli, 2017). This concept is deployed in the discipline of carceral geography (Moran, 2012a) which argues that “the carceral exists in unexpected places beyond the formal contours of detention or prison; carceral scholarship is increasingly identifying previously under-recognised aspects and consequences of confinement, and innovative methodologies are uncovering under-researched elements of carceral experience” (Turner, 2018). The metaphor of Lesvos Island as the Prison Island - which border crosser interviewees introduced - is an indicative example of how the carceral exists beyond detention and prisons. In this sense, my thesis has developed the idea of carceral experience beyond detention, prisons and hotspots. Thus, it contributes to the cross-disciplinary dialogue concerned with spaces and experiences of incarceration and fills in a research gap between criminology and carceral geography. I do that also by emphasising throughout various chapters of my thesis on the harmful experience of time and waiting inside and beyond detention. My thesis focuses on time and space - aspects which are mainly investigated by (carceral) geographers - with the critical criminology and the social harm approach. In this way my thesis contributes to the understanding of harm and violence because; (i) it highlights the range of social harm due to time and waiting beyond the prison settings which as an aspect is under-researched in academic literature; (ii) it approaches

stuckedness, time and enduring waiting as a form of state violence which is intentionally inflicted upon border crossers.

Methodologically this thesis has contributed to knowledge by deploying ethnography with aspects of auto-ethnography as a research method. Personal accounts in academic research of professionals and activists working inside detention centres are rare (Georgoulas & Sarantidis, 2012, 2013; Iliadou, 2012; Sarantidis, 2018b). I have used my personal past experiences and insights as a professional, activist and a resident on Lesbos Island in order to analyse and develop the core idea which traverses this thesis; that the continuum of violence and harms in time and space which the border crossers experience while seeking international protection in Europe are neither new phenomena nor accidents. They are instead the outcome of the continuum of political decisions since the 1985 Schengen Agreement onwards (Akkerman, 2018; Albahari, 2015a; Hess & Kasperek, 2017; Vaughan-Williams, 2015b). I have applied the Vignette technique which includes evocative past personal experiences regarding the phenomenon of unauthorised border crossing on Lesbos before the so-called refugee crisis, in order to highlight the continuum of violence in time and space. Vignettes are testimonies of over a decade witnessing of the multiple forms of border harms and their enduring long-term effects upon people lives.

8.2 Recommendations

In terms of recommendations which could be implemented and improve the everyday realities of border crossers have already being articulated by human rights organisations, activist movements and academics.

- Open borders -Safe passages which lead to Europe. The demand for open borders and safe passages has been loudly articulated for several years from activist networks which have identified that the real problem is the closed border and the militarized, thanatopolitical Border Regime. If there were no borders or border regime, then border crossers, fleeing persecution, conflicts, civil wars and violence, would be able to safely reach Europe and seek for international protection. A safe passage approach would mean that the EU instead of treating the phenomenon of the unauthorised border crossing through the banner of security, criminality and illegality, would provide dignified alternatives towards a coerced displacement for which EU bears responsibility. As Akkerman notes, “This means, at the very least, that the EU should provide safe passage and good reception and shelter for forcibly

displaced persons. It would require a rejection of an approach that dehumanises migrants and encourages illegality. Most of all, it would require a focus by the EU on truly eliminating the reasons people are forced to flee, instead of feeding and enlarging them” (Akkerman, 2018, p. 89)

- The criminalisation of solidarity should be abolished. The EU border regime and the authorities of the EU member states should stop criminalizing solidarity by punishing, harassing and stigmatizing as smugglers/traffickers volunteers, activists, NGOs and solidarity groups, who advocate and/or are involved in search and rescue operations. The criminalisation of solidarity fosters the conditions for further exploitation, violence and harm since border crossers in lack of any other option are coerced to address to the smuggling and trafficking networks.
- EU should stop making financial and political deals and collaborations with authoritarian countries like Turkey, Libya, Niger and Chad in exchange of their commitment to prevent border crossers from entering to Europe. EU policy makers should take responsibility for their political decisions and the involvement of many EU member states’ in wars which have ultimately produced forcibly displaced populations.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Invitation Letters to Participants



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. In my research I am exploring refugees who move through Lesbos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in discussing the experiences of those working in close quarters with refugees inside the hotspot of Moria and refugee camps, as well as to explore which factors alleviate social problems at the border, and which exacerbate them.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview which will last approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

To: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. In my research I am exploring refugees who move through Lesbos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in the experiences of those working in close quarters with refugees inside the hotspot of Moria/ Lesbos and refugee camps, as well as to explore which factors alleviate social problems at the border, and which exacerbate them.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

To The Mayor of Lesbos, Mr. Spyros Galinos,

Dear Mr. S. Galinos,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. I am conducting a research concerning refugees who move through Lesbos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in discussing with you about your reflection on the situation, living conditions, good practises concerning the refugee population as well as the daily realities/political challenges of life working/ dealing with refugees in Lesbos.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview. I would also like to kindly ask you to give me authorisation in order to visit Kara Tepe refugee camp as well as to take interviews from the coordinator and the staff, who are under your supervision and work there.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

To: The International Organisation of Migration (IOM)

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. In my research I am exploring refugees who move through Lesvos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in the experiences of those working in close quarters with refugees inside the hotspot of Moria and refugee camps, as well as to explore which factors alleviate social problems at the border, and which exacerbate them.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

TO
FRONTEX European Border and Coast Guard Agency

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. I am conducting a research concerning refugees who move through Lesbos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in discussing with FRONTEX professionals, who are involved in the screening/ identification procedures of irregular migrants in the detention centre of Moria/ Lesbos. I am interested in exploring the process of screening/ identification, as well as the experiences of those working in the hotspot and the daily realities of life working in the detention.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

To: The European Asylum Office (EASO)

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. I am conducting a research concerning refugees who move through Lesbos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in discussing with EASO staff about the registration and asylum procedures taking place in the hotspot of Moria, the experiences of those working in the hotspot as well as in exploring the daily realities of life working in the detention centre.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene, between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

To
The First Reception and Identification Service of Lesbos,
Coordinator of the hotspot of Moria, Lesbos

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. I am conducting a research concerning refugees who move through Lesbos Island, in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in discussing the experiences of those working in the hotspot of Moria and in exploring the daily realities of life working in the detention centre.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour, in Mytilene between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

(Signature)



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

26 December 2016

To Regional Asylum Office (RAO), Lesbos/ Greece

Dear madam/sir,

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am a doctoral researcher at the Open University (UK), Department of Sociology. I am conducting a research concerning refugees who move through Lesbos Island in order to reach Europe (please see the attached Information Sheet). As part of my research I am interested in discussing with RAO staff about the registration and asylum procedures taking place in the hotspot of Moria in Lesbos Island, the experiences of those working in the hotspot as well as in exploring the daily realities of life working in the detention centre.

In this respect, I would like to kindly ask you if you could give me a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in Mytilene, between 18 January and 1 February 2017. In case it is more convenient to you, we could instead arrange a Skype interview.

I would really appreciate if you could positively respond to my request. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Iliadou

Signature

Appendix 2 Information Sheet



Evgenia Iliadou
Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk
The Open University,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Information Sheet for practitioners:

An exploration of everyday harms in the lives of refugees in Lesbos Island

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am conducting a research study on behalf of the Open University in Milton Keynes, UK. Please find below all the information concerning my research and what it involves. If there is something that you do not understand, please feel free to ask.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of refugees moving through Lesbos in order to find sanctuary in Europe. It will explore refugees' experiences, lives and migration journeys from their countries of origin to their host countries. The study will consider migrations trajectories, and will look at aspects of migration which are harmful, or which help mitigate harm in refugees' lives.

Why am I invited to participate?

You are invited to participate in this research because you have been identified as a practitioner working in the one of the following fields: refugee advocacy, psychology or counselling, immigration law and practice, border control, violence support or advocacy, or policy/legislation development. For this reason you have been invited to participate in this research.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation to the research is voluntary, thus, you have the right to refuse to participate in case you do not want to, and withdraw up until the point of transcription and publication.

What happens if I change my mind before, during and after the interview?

In case you change your mind you are free to withdraw and leave at any time with no explanation. You can request all the information you shared with me not to be used and destroyed until November 2017. After that date all information (data) will be anonymised and transcribed.

What will happen during the interview?

- 1) I will ask you to complete the consent form and sign it. In case you do not want to sign it I will ask you to record your verbal consent.
- 2) I will ask you to participate in one or two, face-to-face interviews with me during which I will ask you general and open ended questions about your work, observations and experiences as a professional/ practitioner/ activist/ volunteer concerning the issues related to refugees' migration, registration and asylum procedures. This may include discussing homelessness, harm, interactions with local authorities or people and other professionals in Lesbos Island. The interviews should last no longer than one hour and a half and will take place at an agreed site, date and time that is convenient to you. You do not have to answer questions and discuss something in case you are not feeling comfortable.
- 3) The interview will be recorded by Dictaphone unless you request otherwise, in which case I will take hand written notes.

Will anyone be able to tell who I am?

No, your participation is confidential and I will keep safe all the information from our discussion, while your name, identity, personal information, and other information you share with me will be anonymized. That means that your name and other people's names you share with me will be changed and no other people will be able to tell who you

are. All the information you share with me is confidential. I am required to disclose information that poses a significant risk of harm to others.

What will happen to the information I will give you?

The information that you give me will be encrypted, safely stored and destroyed five years after my research finishes. No one will have access to your information except me. The findings of my study will only be used for research purposes and may be published in academic/scientific journals and reports. Your personal information will be anonymised thus no one will be able to tell who you are and that you have participated in my research, by giving me interview and other information.

How can I find you if I want to contact you?

If you have any other questions about the study I would be very happy to answer them. Please contact Evgenia Iliadou on:

Tel. (+44) 01908 655019

Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk

Who can I contact if I want to report a problem?

In case you want to contact someone else at the Open University concerning the research or the researcher, you can contact Dr Karim Murji on:

Tel. (+44) 01908 59740

Email: karim.murji@open.ac.uk

Address:

Dr Karim Murji
Faculty of Social Sciences
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Information Sheet for refugees:

An exploration of everyday harms in the lives of refugees in Lesvos Island.

My name is Evgenia Iliadou and I am conducting a research study on behalf of the Open University in Milton Keynes, UK. Please find below all the information concerning my research and what it involves. If there is something that you do not understand, please feel free to ask me at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of refugees moving through Lesvos in order to find sanctuary in Europe. It will explore refugees' experiences, lives and migration journeys from their countries of origin to their host countries. The study will consider migrations trajectories, and will look at aspects of migration which are harmful, or which help mitigate harm in refugees' lives.

Why am I invited to participate?

A key element of this research is to centralise the concerns of people seeking asylum. As such, your participation is an important way to understand people's experiences of life in Lesvos so that harms might be mitigated, and barriers to support may be addressed.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

What happens if I change my mind during or after the interview?

In case you change your mind you are free to withdraw and leave at any time with no explanation. You can request all the information you shared with me not to be used and destroyed until November 2017. After that date all information (data) will be anonymised and transcribed.

What will happen during the study?

During the study:

- 1) I will ask you if you agree to participate to my study by completing and signing the 'Consent Form'. If you do not want to sign it, I will ask to record your verbal consent.
- 2) I will ask you to participate in one or two, face-to-face interviews with me during which I will be asking you general and open ended questions about your migration, life, positive and harmful experiences as a refugee in Lesvos island. The interviews should last no longer than one hour and a half while they will take place at an agreed time and place convenient to you. You do not need to answer to anything you do not wish to.
- 3) The interview will be recorded by Dictaphone unless you request otherwise, in which case I will take hand written notes.

Will anyone be able to tell who I am?

No. I will keep safe all the information from our discussion, while your name, identity, personal information, and other information you share with me will be anonymized. That means that your name and other people's names you share with me will be changed. So, no other people will be able to tell who you are. All the information you share with me is confidential. I am required to disclose information that poses a significant risk of harm to others.

What will happen to the information I will give you?

The information that you give me will be safely stored and destroyed five years after my research finishes. No one will have access to your information except me. The findings of my study will only be used for research purposes and may be published in academic/scientific journals, reports. Your personal information will be anonymised and no one will be able to tell who you are and that you have participated in my research (by giving me interview and other information).

How can I find you if I want to contact you?

If you have any other questions about the study I would be very happy to answer them. Please contact Evgenia Iliadou on:

Tel: (+44) 1908 655019

Email: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk

Who can I contact if I want to report a problem?

In case you want to contact someone else at the Open University in order to report problems concerning the research or the researcher, you can contact Dr Karim Murji on:

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The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

Appendix 3 Consent Form

CONSENT FORM



Consent form

Name of participant: _____

Name of principal Investigator(s): Evgenia Iliadou _____

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written statement to keep. ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
2. I understand that my participation will involve taking part in an interview and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the written statement. ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
3. I acknowledge that:
- a. the possible effects of participating in this research have been explained to my satisfaction; ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- b. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided; ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- c. the project is for the purpose of research; ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- d. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements; ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- e. I have been informed that with my consent the data generated will be audio recorded and stored on researcher's computer; ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- f. Any personal data will be referred to by pseudonyms in any publications arising from the research; ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- I consent to this interview being audio-taped ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)
- I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings ☐ yes ☐ no (please tick)

Participant signature: _____

Date: _____

Evgenia Iliadou, e-mail: evgenia.iliadou@open.ac.uk, The Open University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, UK

This research has been reviewed by, and received a favourable opinion, from the OU Human Research Ethics Committee – HREC reference number: HREC/2016/2226: Ethics (<http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/>).

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